Hafa Adai!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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PERSON OF YEAR: SOUDELOR VOLUNTEERS

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

In the ruinous wake of a typhoon that snapped power poles, crippled the power and water grid, and upended and destroyed homes, the people of Saipan found immediate relief in the uncompensated, unasked for but deliberate, thoughtful, and compassionate aid of volunteers who came—both young and old, island-based and from abroad—to secure the island's wellbeing after the storm.

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Volunteers help with debris cleanup organized by CARE.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Anna-Kay Ellis loads a vehicle with relief supplies to take to a homeowner whose roof was completely peeled off during Typhoon Soudelor's landfall.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ten-year-old Easton dela Cruz, a Hopwood Junior High School student, beams with pride while volunteering to help with packing the goods donated to Karidat.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Java Joes: Brewing up a business model

By DAISY DEMAPAN
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REPORTER

Behind many successful small businesses are passion-driven individuals dedicated to quality products and unrelenting service.

When Manju Pandey and Mahesh Thapa took over the operation of Java Joe's, the couple brought with them their hands-on approach to business. Mahesh, in particular, has a background

See JAVA on Page 4

DAISY DEMAPAN

Java Joe's owners Manju Pandey and Mahesh Thapa believe in a hands-on approach to restaurant service and hospitality, calling their business a "second home for customers."

Thousands of workers short this new year

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

» USCIS: For those OK'd, hard copy of permit not needed

About 800 contract workers whose work permits were submitted for renewal 90 days or more before the Dec. 31 deadline will see their permits processed this week, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan. However, that still means businesses will not have enough workers to begin the New Year.

Some 2,000 CW applicants that fall outside this timeframe would be reviewed with "some priority" by

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Soudelor leads top stories of 2015

The wide-ranging destruction and cost in property damage wrought by Typhoon Soudelor in August, together with the several months it took to restore some semblance of normalcy to Saipan and the scores of people who still remain homeless up to now made this natural disaster the top story of 2015, based on a *Saipan Tribune* tally of the most significant events that took place this year.

Coming in a close second was the untimely passing of Gov. Eloy S. Inos, who succumbed to diabetes just two days ago, Dec. 29, in Seattle, Washington, and the unprecedented ascendancy of Lt. Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to the governorship.

Read more of the Top 15 stories that made the front page of the *Saipan Tribune* this year, starting on Page 2.

INSIDE

LOCAL

Saipan Tribune asks the public what they wish for this the new year.

» PAGE 11

WORLD

The far-flung attacks claimed by Islamic State militants is the top news story of 2015.

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LIFE & STYLE

"Star Wars" is named the Associated Press Entertainer of the Year.

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Top Stories of 2015

1 Saipan's struggles with Soudelor

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

Just days before it became the most powerful cyclone of 2015, Typhoon Soudelor tore through Saipan near midnight of Aug. 2, leaving behind a trail of destruction in its path and most of the island paralyzed.

Many were caught off guard, with the level of devastation not seen in decades since Super Typhoon Kim and Typhoon Jean hit the Marianas.

Soudelor's strength was unexpected as it rapidly intensified when it approached the Marianas. From what was forecasted as a bearable Category 2, Soudelor was later reclassified as a ferocious Category 4 cyclone, with over-water wind intensity of 130 miles per hour and typical peak gust of 165 mph.

There were no fatalities, though a number of people sustained injuries and were brought to the hospital.

"I think it is commendable here that there was no loss of life. This was a serious event," Federal Emergency Management Agency federal coordinating officer Stephen M. DeBlasio Sr. said in an interview prior to his departure on Dec. 19. "I think it just represents a very resilient community, a very resilient government that supports their citizens and they know when to ask for help and they did."

Before the worst hours, about 150 individuals took to shelters but this number blew up to over 400 as many houses were affected and more shelter sites had to be opened to accommodate families.

According to the American Red Cross, almost 3,000 houses sustained damage based on their assessment around the island. Of the total affected, 356 houses were completely destroyed, 1,250 suffered major damage

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while 1,264 had minor damage.

Soudelor left the Commonwealth powerless, figuratively and literally. The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. suffered much damage not only with power distribution but also with power generation. Around 400 wooden power poles, 200 transformers, and hundreds of meters of lines were damaged.

There was also no water supply for the entire island, soon after the typhoon and people scrambled for supplies, especially gas.

The airports and seaports also suffered damage and were unable to operate or had limited operations for some time.

President Barack Obama issued a major disaster declaration for the CNMI on Aug. 5, opening up a number of federal assistance to the island and to some extent, to Tinian as well.

FEMA, together with hundreds of federal representatives and off-island volunteers, arrived on island to assist with the relief and recovery operations. These include the U.S Department of Defense with the Marines and the Navy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Preparedness, Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, among others.

DeBlasio estimated that $100 million to 120 million will be spent by FEMA when they're finished with the disaster response.

Over 8,000 heads of households registered with FEMA for assistance, with 4,821 getting approved. To date, almost $2.5 million was given out by FEMA under the individual and households program. It has also obligated more than $1.3 million to public assistance. More federal dollars in the form of reimbursements and grants are expected to come in.

Unity in the community

Despite the hardship the residents went through, Soudelor also unified the people in the community. Aside from non-government and non-profit organizations on and off island, various groups formed to take the lead in volunteering to help those most in need such as United4Saipan and the Community Outreach Recovery Effort.

Eventually, a long-term umbrella organization named Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts was formed to pool together resources and respond to the unmet needs of victims.

Unmet needs

Almost five months after the disaster, scars of what Soudelor left behind is still evident in the community—physically as well as in the lives of residents.

Although debris cleanup has been ongoing since the first days of the disaster, there are still large debris and trash that need to be picked up. Some damaged houses and establishments have yet to start rebuilding.

"It is difficult to determine a specific percentage of those still with unmet needs from the total number affected. The way and degree to which people were affected varied and is a challenge to quantify. However, we are working closely with our partners at the Red Cross who are running the Immediate Disaster Case Management Program," CARE executive director Jenny Hegland said.

"At this time, the greatest number of unmet needs are related to housing, repair, and rebuilding assistance," she added.

More resilient

For FEMA, the response has been challenging and rewarding and has given them lessons.

"It's been a rewarding and sometimes challenging situation. Just the geography from being on island is very challeng-

See STRUGGLES on Page 4

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SOUDELOR

From Page 1

As the year comes to a close, *Saipan Tribune* would like to recognize these tireless souls for their efforts, by honoring all our Typhoon Soudelor volunteers with the accolade of being *Saipan Tribune*'s Person of Year for 2015.

In the Northern Mariana Islands, the concept of *inafa'maolek*, or "doing good for others," is a core value of the CNMI culture and people since its ancestors settled these islands, Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday. This innate trait is ingrained in everything that its people strive to do for the betterment of the Commonwealth, he said.

"I cannot speak highly enough of the hard work and compassion shown by the volunteer community that sprung to life after Typhoon Soudelor," Torres said. He thanked the many volunteers who embody the *inafa'maolek* spirit and hopes that in the New Year the joy of volunteering for the betterment of our community spreads even farther.

Volunteerism is an expression of a person's involvement in their community, Torres said. Trust and reciprocity, grounded in a shared understanding of common obligations, are values at the heart of good governance and good citizenship.

What the CNMI learned in the past year is that volunteerism is—at its core—about relationships and their potential to enhance the wellbeing of individuals and the community as a whole. In countries throughout the world, volunteerism is deeply rooted in traditional beliefs and community practices.

This spirit of concern for others was exemplified immediately after Soudelor struck.

On Aug. 7, a makeshift group of volunteers organized direct drinking water relief efforts from the Megabyte store on Beach Road between Star Water and Triple J. They asked for warm bodies, vehicles with gas, and donated cases of drinking water to be delivered directly to village residents in need.

They had gone to villages and seen the living conditions of residents hit hard by Soudelor. Not everyone had access to transportation, fuel, or money to get water to drink. That's why they thought people with resources and power should be distributing them.

Typhoon Soudelor tore through Saipan on a Sunday but residents saw no direct water relief efforts five days after the storm. "[There are] families who have been living in walls with no roofs who just don't have drinking water—which is unacceptable. It's unjust," volunteer Jenny Hegland told *Saipan Tribune* outside the Megabyte store that month. "Our goal today is to get drinking water directly to people in villages. We are asking people to bring as much drinking water here to donated."

"The CNMI is blessed with a large community of volunteers," said another volunteer, Glen Hunter, "who put aside their personal needs in an effort to ensure that their neighbors were safe and cared for."

"We had a truck of two containers of water that we had gotten donated," said Brian Flaherty, "and we were able to take that water to a couple of neighborhoods and fill up five-gallon jugs."

Waking up to the typhoon's wake, Flaherty said he was immediately kind of awestruck. "But at the same time you felt immediately a sense a community in our neighborhood," he said, "because just down the street people were coming down to help you chop down the tree that was blocking the road that was blocking you from getting out. And sharing information, and sharing meals, and sharing fresh water.

"It was a community-building experience for sure," he said. "It's wonderful to see that sense of broader community."

"Our whole humanitarian mission is based on the work of volunteers," said John Hirsch yesterday, director of the local chapter of the American Red Cross. "They are really the backbone of what we do."

"We had over 200 volunteers helping us over Soudelor. And they spent over 18,000 hours during the operation."

Recovery is only as good as the spirit of the community, Hirsch added. "People locked hands and helped each other. …In all the 30 years I've been on Saipan, I've never seen such a great spirit of one mission to help the people most impacted."

The shining stars of these volunteers were the young, added Hirsch, who worked tirelessly and energetically and showed up day in and day out under dire circumstances.

"The first three or four weeks—where you, me, and everyone had no power or water—and they were still helping people they didn't even know. That was an amazing thing."

"It started with word of mouth," he added, noting the students did casework, outreach, or warehouse efforts.

Moving forward

Geri Willis, who saw over 150 people on the list who came to meetings for CNMI Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts, which she led at the call of the Inos administration—an umbrella of volunteer groups working together after the storm—said some volunteers put in 20-hour days in the first month after the typhoon. Hours in the hundreds of thousands when put all together, she added.

"I started with people who were strong in the community…who worked hard. That's how I developed the program," Willis said. "I never did any long-term recovery in my life. I am just a little 74-year-old lady. From there, it was just the community spirit. It wasn't about any one given person."

The volunteer group discovered and aided with medical needs, health needs—like problems with mold growing in homes. On rebuilding efforts, construction experts went over rebuilding plans and noted materials that were advised against being used in rebuilding. Case management focused on if families needed mattresses, for example.

"When I went to one of the houses—there were three people in this house—one had no leg and the other one was blind and the other one couldn't get around. The home had nothing that was for disabilities," Willis said.

"The problem I discovered when I got everybody together is that we had all these agencies on island. But they had never really worked together before."

She said CARE is a group focused on long-term recovery that understands that the island will see a typhoon in the future. "When, we don't know. But we have this organization. …We can pull everybody back in," she said.

"The real person that has got credit for this—and I know he doesn't like to get credit—is Matt Deleon Guerrero," the chief of staff of governor Torres, she said. "It's his vision and foresight that he saw the need for this and we jumped on it within the first week."

JAVA

From Page 1

in hospitality management, with 20 years of experience in Australia and the United States.

The couple shared a common interest in business and first sought to open up in the United States but then realized that they preferred the warmth of a tropical island, adding that they enjoy being part of the community and its laidback lifestyle that is a complete contrast to the mainland.

"We are satisfied with what we are doing, enjoy participating in community events, supporting the local market and public schools and charities. It's not a lot but we do what we can," Mahesh said.

Despite the hard economic times and disaster, Mahesh said their prices have remained the same since 2009.

"No matter the economics, you need to have consistency and persistence and quality of service," he shares, noting that another important aspect of their business is ambience.

"It's all about creating that atmosphere and being familiar with customers," knowing what their preferences are when it comes to food and beverages, he said.

Java Joes uses locally grown coffee blended fresh everyday, topped with homemade whipped cream.

"If you are a coffee lover, you can tell from the aroma and flavor. You know the difference. Customers always get the best quality along with freshly baked goods and food," he said.

"Customer service is more important and there is no compromise. You must be willing to go the extra mile to meet their expectations. People come here for so many different reasons. It's not just to have some coffee," it's a need to unwind, he added.

Helping hands

Both Manju and Mahesh were born in Nepal, a landlocked country wedged between the Himalayas stretched across China and the bustling hub of India.

In April and May this year, Nepal was hit by devastating earthquakes, killing more than 9,000 people, destroying houses and historic monuments in remote areas away from the country's capital.

The devastation and the outpouring of help from the community prompted the creation of the Nepalese Community of Saipan, enabling the local community to donate food, clothes, construction materials and school supplies in order to aid in Nepal's recovery.

Putting donation boxes in local markets, the couple offered what they could.

"We could not afford to ship the items so Manju left in May and distributed the donations directly to the remote areas," Mahesh said.

Mahesh said that none would have been possible without the help of the community, their customers and other organizations who helped host a Run for Nepal event in June for earthquake survivors.

Reflecting on Typhoon Soudelor, which came only a month later, Mahesh expressed the sadness affecting the community and his determination to provide a place of solace.

"Everybody suffered. Homes were destroyed and some people were homeless. Our business was also partially affected," saying that their kitchen was inoperable.

Despite this, reopening the coffee shop was critical for the business and for many people who could not prepare their food, charge their electronic devices, and who wanted to escape from the aftermath for a while.

"It was our opportunity to serve and once we knew we could open, we kept open to serve our community. We didn't want to turn away families," he said. "We opened in two different shifts. One in the morning and the other at night. It was very challenging but we had to do it. Everyday we lined up for ice to make sure we could serve the customers."

The day after the typhoon, he said, safety was the primary issue. Debris cleaning and the fallen power poles were something they had to consider first.

'Second home'

Getting to know their customers to customize their beverage option to fit dietary needs or to suit their palate is something the couple find enjoyable.

Mahesh said they aim to make their coffee shop a "second home for customers," a welcoming place for those looking for a haven in what he calls paradise.

Although his personal favorite is the Americano, where only hot water is added to an espresso, Mahesh said their various selections of pearl shakes, fruit smoothies, and cappuccinos are also popular.

Serving 150 to 200 customers daily, they say their long-term goal is to open another small coffee shop closer to the central district.

However he says, "feedback is always important. We're all human beings and there's always room for improvement."

In his experience as a small business, "if you keep your employees happy, your customers will be happy and you won't have to worry."

Open seven days a week from 7am to 10am, Java Joes coffee shop and restaurant is located in Dan Dan across Joeten Supermarket.

Java Joe's originally opened on March 7, 2005.

WORKERS

From Page 1

federal officials, Sablan said yesterday, relaying information has directly received from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

"But they have made no assurances that they will process them," noted Sablan.

How this will affect the Commonwealth to start the New Year remains to be seen. Employers could pay employees overtime to make up for those employees who are not there, Sablan said.

"It's very unfortunate and it's unacceptable," added Sablan. "And I have let USCIS know this, and will continue to do so."

Sablan received word from USCIS yesterday morning that employers can rely on their workers' online case status, said Sablan. That means those whose permits have been approved already and that status shows online may continue working.

It's been widely believed that workers must have hard-copy permits on hand to continue working.

"What they should do is print that out and keep that for their records," Sablan said.

In light of the issue, Sablan encouraged businesses to hire U.S. workers in the long run to save money and avoid the headaches of the permitting process, as the CNMI continues to see a reduction of CW permits allowed in the CNMI.

Bog down

Business leaders in the Commonwealth have noted a bog down in the permitting process.

Saipan Tribune learned this month that business investors have been seeking assistance in expediting the process for foreign workers under CW visas, even if these workers are eligible for H-visas, *Saipan Tribune* learned. For one, an unnamed construction firm seeking to do business in the CNMI has a pending application for some 500 contract workers who could readily be classified under the H-visa class.

Sablan said yesterday that if there are new workers needed for a specific or particular project then he would urge federal agencies to have these people apply for H-visas.

"So once those workers are gone, then those workers should leave," Sablan said. "They shouldn't be using up the CWs, because CWs should be a catch all for the many positions here that are not available under H-1 or H-2 visas.

"When you sign for that paper you attest that there is no other employment visa available to you. That's why you applied for CW," said Sablan

STRUGGLES

From Page 3

ing," DeBlasio said. "We've come up with some ways that maybe we can expedite that a bit the next time around by maybe just having a barge dedicated to us."

DeBlasio hopes CNMI would be more resilient should future storms come along our way.

"My desire is to know that when we leave here, and the recovery continues, that there will be a lot of consideration for mitigating the potential to experience the same type of devastation. I certainly know that the infrastructure, the power infrastructure has been hardened with new poles," DeBlasio said. "You would not have the same impact if the same storm, Soudelor, came through tomorrow. You would not have the devastation that we experienced here. And hopefully, the same will apply as they build back the housing infrastructure and they apply these mitigation concepts and techniques so that we will become stronger and more resilient in the future."

2 Gov. Eloy S. Inos dies

Gov. Eloy S. Inos died Tuesday morning after a protracted battle with diabetes, making him the only CNMI governor to pass away while in office. He was 66 years old.

Lt. Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, who took over the reins of government, is now the youngest ever to serve as CNMI governor. He was immediately sworn in before noon Tuesday in a private ceremony at the Office of the Governor. A public swearing in was held later in the afternoon at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

Inos

Administration officials said yesterday that Torres would be flying off-island on Friday to Seattle, Washington, to be with the family of Inos. Torres has expressed his desire to accompany Inos' body back to the Commonwealth for a state funeral, tentatively set next Saturday, Jan. 9, officials said.

Law enforcement officials and the administration are currently working out the logistics for the state funeral at Mount Carmel Cathedral, and the arrival of off-island dignitaries like the governor of Guam.

Press secretary Ivan Blanco said yesterday they expect to officially confirm a date for the funeral today, Thursday, as they wait confirmation from Inos' family. Blanco also extended thanks to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, who has expressed his condolences and has offered to help facilitate Inos' arrival.

Cabinet members at a meeting yesterday were asked to be present at the Saipan airport when Inos' remains arrive. Right now, Mass is being held at Mount Carmel at 6am every morning.

Inos died in a Seattle, Washington hospital on Monday, mainland time. Despite initial signs of improvement after a surgery earlier this year, his condition deteriorated, the administration said in a statement Tuesday.

Inos will be remembered as a father figure, mentor, and meticulous mathematician and friend, who cared and thought deeply about the betterment of the Commonwealth, according to multiple interviews with lawmakers, Cabinet, and other officials. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

3 Network blackout in CNMI

In early July, the CNMI suffered a massive networks communications blackout when IT&E's fiber optic cable between Saipan and Tinian sustained a "cut"—damage that the telecommunications officials blamed on the wear and tear of passing typhoons and inclement weather. The blackout caused major airline flights to be cancelled, bank and credit card transactions to halt, and opened up weeks of agonizingly slow Internet speed.

The telecommunications firm slowly brought back some services with temporary backup measures and the cable was repaired weeks later when the CS *Durable*, a repair ship from Taiwan, arrived to fix the cable break near the coast and close to the shore of the Coral Ocean Point. Normal Internet speeds resumed on the wee hours of July 27, a Monday morning.

Up to now, there is still no hard amount on how much the CNMI lost in terms of revenue and other damage from this incident. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

4 Fitial pleads guilty; sentence commuted

Benigno R. Fitial resigned as governor on Feb. 20, 2013, just days after the House of Representatives impeached him on charges of corruption, felony, and neglect of duty, but it was in 2015 when he finally threw in the towel to put an end to the criminal case filed against him.

Fitial

In May 2015—exactly 12 months after the CNMI government, through special prosecutor George Hasselback, filed the criminal charges—the 69-year-old Fitial pleaded guilty to misconduct in public office and conspiracy to commit theft of services, making him the first convicted chief executive of the Commonwealth.

Fitial made the plea while in Makati, Philippines, where he has been receiving medical treatment. He appeared at the hearing in the U.S. District Court for the NMI via teleconference.

The offense of misconduct in public office refers to Fitial's actions related to the temporary departure of a Chinese female prisoner from the Department of Corrections in Susupe to massage him at his house on Jan. 8, 2010.

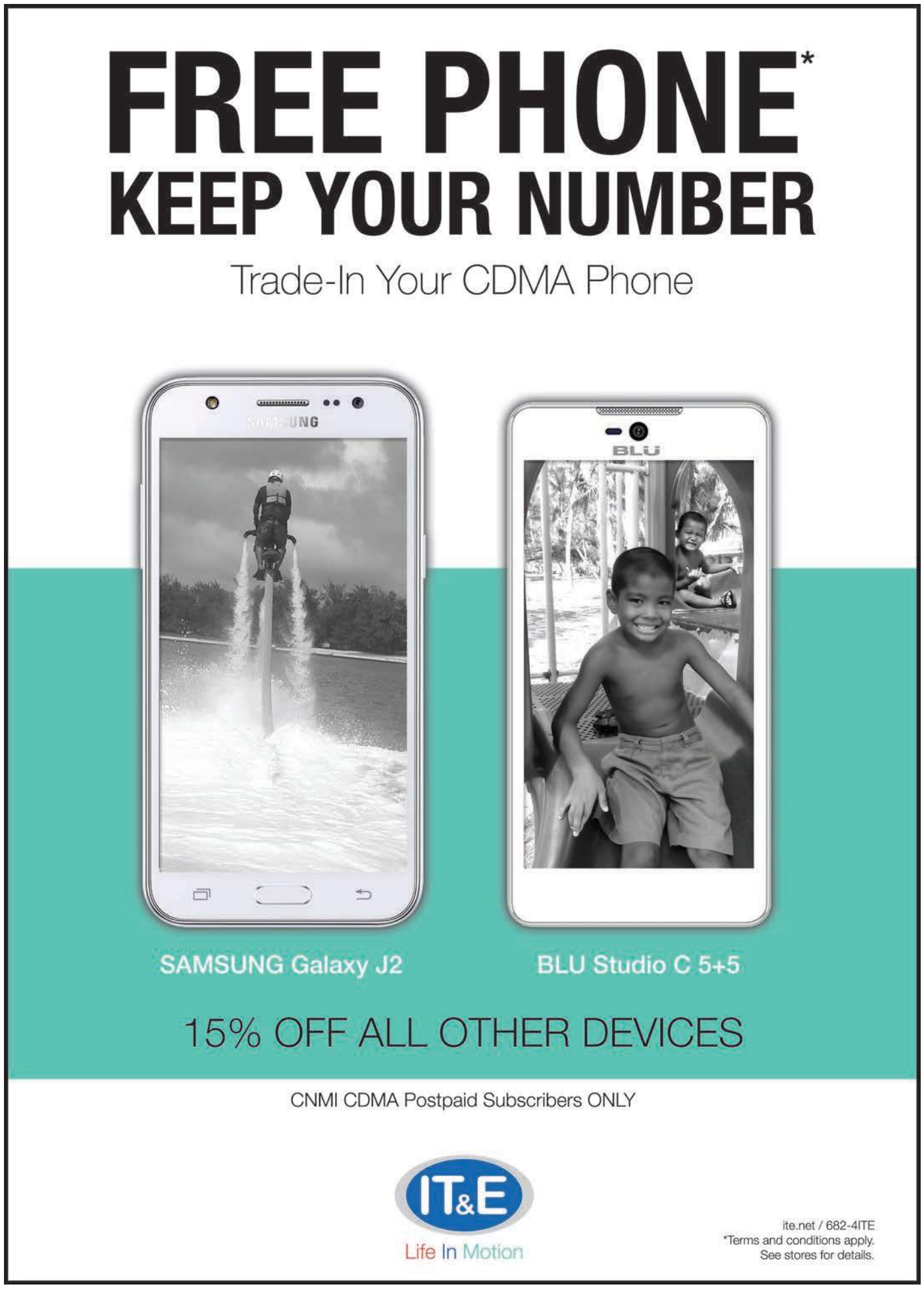
Conspiracy to commit theft of services charge refers to Fitial's role related to former attorney general Edward T. Buckingham's efforts to evade lawful service of process during his departure from the Commonwealth at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport on Aug. 3 or 4, 2012.

Fitial's counsel, Stephen Nutting, said Fitial decided to plead guilty because he understood the kind of toll the case is putting on his family. He said Fitial wanted to do what he could to put an end to this as painlessly as possible for all concerned.

Last June 23, Wiseman imposed a one-year prison sentence. Fitial was supposed to start serving his prison term last July 6, but the late governor Eloy S. Inos, at the recommendation of the Board of Parole, commuted the prison term the day before. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

5 First Saipan casino opens

Best Sunshine International, Ltd. launched Saipan's first and only live-gaming casino on Nov. 28. The casino, intended as a training



facility and located within the T Galleria in Garapan, has been open since July 27 but held its grand opening in November to cocktails, Chinese lion dances, Refaulawasch performers, and live music, with a host of government officials and business leaders attending.

Best Sunshine, which holds an exclusive casino licensing agreement on Saipan, is currently building a casino resort in the former Samoa housing center in Garapan, and also plans to complete their $7 billion investment in the northern end of island in the coveted estate around Marpi. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

6 Lighting problem, others plague airport

Saipan's Francisco C. Ada International Airport was plagued with a number of problems this year, forcing them operate on limited capacities on several occasions.

Just this month, the airport's runway and taxiway were left in the dark for several days due to the electrical problems.

On Nov. 28, fire broke out in one of the airport's hand holes. The Commonwealth Ports Authority couldn't determine the cause of the fire. Only daytime operations were allowed for about four days. Approximately 6,000 linear feet of cable was pulled to re-energize the lights.

Prior to the mishap, the CPA board just approved the hiring for an electrician during their November board meeting in Rota.

Last Dec. 18, the airport went back to daytime operations when only 30 percent of their runway was lit. CPA had to shut down the entire electrical system to preserve and avoid burning out the airport's entire electrical system. CPA said one possible cause may have been from rodents in the electrical conduits.

In August, CPA also had to limit the airport's operation after one of its firefighting trucks went down for maintenance, forcing CPA to restrict the sizes of planes that could land to match their reduced response capacity.

The airport was also badly affected by Typhoon Soudelor in August, which caused hundreds of thousands of additional expenses.

In July, airport operations also suffered because of the islandwide network outage. ***(Frauleine Michelle Villanueva-Dizon)***

7 Tinian Dynasty casino shuts its doors

The Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino closed its doors on Aug. 14, with management blaming the lack of tourists in the wake of the devastation of Typhoon Soudelor. It had announced a reopening date of Dec. 15 but that day came and went with the casino still shuttered.

The revenues generated by the casino operations are seen as a lifeline for employees who rely on the Dynasty for employment, and whose employment with the municipality is supported by casino revenues. That meant more than 100 employees were laid off, and the closure effected the non-renewal of jobs at the Municipality of Tinian, according to Tinian Mayor Joey San Nicolas in August.

The casino owners have also not complied with the submission of all requested documents and investigation fees, according to regulators, the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission.

Two weeks after the casino closed, the hotel announced that in early September it would shut down its hotel and restaurants operations as well, but later that month reversed its decision. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

8 Navy orders more studies for plans

The U.S. Department of Navy conceded in October to public and agency concern over the large-scale training and bombing ranges on Pagan and Tinian. The Navy ordered a new round of studies—as part of the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA—for impacts to coral on Tinian and Pagan, and impacts to the groundwater aquifer of Tinian.

The announcement came on the heels of formal comments from the Environmental Protection Agency who declared that the Navy had not discussed "vulnerability" of the Tinian aquifer to contamination. The Navy's analysis did not fully consider the highly permeable Marianas limestone, which underlies most of the project area on Tinian, the EPA said.

On corals, the Navy's plans to permanently remove more than 10 acres of coral on Tinian to construct assault vehicle landing ramps would result in "high-magnitude, severe impacts to coral reefs and marine habitat," the EPA said, with another 10.3 acres for indirect impacts.

Data omissions have been said to mar the Navy's environmental impact studies, and local agencies and government consultants believe the military's designations of "less than significant" impacts to water quality, among many others, on Tinian and Pagan must be changed. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

9 DPL opens bid for Mariana Resort lot; resort assigns lease to Best Sunshine

Saipan casino owner Best Sunshine International, Ltd. was assigned a piece of prime Marpi property in the Mariana Resort and

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If available for existing building showing exact location & building details
Owner Title Information
Owner Asking Price

Spa lands earlier this month, after Kan Pacific—the owners of the Marpi resort—stuck a deal with the casino to assign the remaining years of its lease, which expires in 2018, to the casino.

The move backtracked on the public fervor the resort had been raising after the Department of Public Lands announced in June that competitive bids would now be the rule for all expiring public land leases. Hotel officials said then that they were shocked by the news and said they were led to believe by DPL their lease would be extended. Following some testy back and forth correspondence that surfaced in local newspapers about the decision—DPL claimed they were constitutionally mandated to seek bids, Kan Pacific said this would be breach of contract with government—Kan Pacific held a rally in November that drew hundreds in support of a new lease. DPL opened the bid a week later, and several weeks after that, Kan Pacific and Best Sunshine announced they would be working together "to bring the Commonwealth into a new era." ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

10 Two homicides in a row stun NMI

The first ever two homicides in a row stunned the community last April 21 when news broke out that James Patrick Deleon Guerrero, a security guard, was fatally shot by a masked man during an attempted robbery at Royal Poker in Afetnas, a day after police discovered that Ana Maria Limes was killed in her house in Oleai.

As of yesterday, the killer of Deleon Guerrero has yet to be identified. Many suggested that the Department of Public Safety release the video footage of the incident to identify the gunman. DPS has yet to release the footage.

As of yesterday, Sylvester Rogopes Sablan, the husband of Limes tagged as the person of interest in her murder, has yet to be charged in this case. Sablan is facing "ice" and criminal trespass charges.

Sablan's counsel is relying upon the defense of insanity at the time when the defendant committed the alleged crime in connection with criminal trespass and possession of methamphetamine or "ice" charges.

Deleon Guerrero, 39, was shot in the back and was found dead inside the restroom of the poker arcade, where he tried to hide from the armed suspect.

The male suspect was described as about 5'6" to 5'8" tall, wearing a black mask covering his face and military fatigue and gloves.

Although there have been two double homicide cases on Saipan in the past, this was the first time that two homicides occurred in a row in the CNMI.

Police investigation revealed that the poker arcade's female cashier saw the masked suspect walk in and fire a handgun at Deleon Guerrero.

Deleon Guerrero ran toward the bathroom, while the cashier hid under the booth. Two more shots were fired, then the suspect fled the scene.

In Limes' murder, the former staff assistant of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan was found dead inside her house. Department of Public Safety's 911 dispatch received a call of a suspicious bloody room at the residence of Limes in San Jose or Oleai Village.

Patrol officers were dispatched and found the body at the entrance to the living room door. Limes showed signs of being deceased for some time, with fatal injuries to the head.

Limes was a regular cultural dance performer at the annual Flame Tree Festival. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

11 Storeowner, diving instructor still missing

The community became alarmed with the mysterious and separate disappearances of Saipan Fresh Market Zhi Yuan Li and scuba diving instructor Mei Hua Zhao in 2015.

As of yesterday Li and Zhao remained missing, despite thousands of dollars in monetary rewards offered by family members and friends.

In Li's case, police recovered Zhi Yuan Li's Toyota Tacoma pickup truck the day after his family reported his disappearance. It was found abandoned on a dirt road between Ladder Beach and Obyan Beach.

In Zhao's case, she was reported missing last Oct. 19. The following day, her Toyota Tacoma was found by her friends parked behind Joker's Bar in Garapan.

The mystery of Li's disappearance came in the wake of the murder of his uncle, Hai Ren Li, in 2014.

In Zhao's case, her last communication with her husband, Guang Zhe Xuan, owner of Go Pro Diving, was last Oct. 19. At that time, Xuan was on Tinian while his wife was reportedly in Gualo Rai after she had just finished a diving excursion with customers.

Zhao, 25, was reported missing the following day.

Last February, then-Lt. Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres discussed with federal law enforcement officials efforts to combat drugs and crimes in the CNMI as well as the mysterious disappearance of store owner Li and the murder of his uncle, Hai Ren Li.

Li, 43, was reportedly last seen on Jan. 17 at 11am, seeing a friend at an "accounting office" near a tire shop in Puerto Rico. His family reported his disappearance to police that day at 7:56pm.

A family member has offered a $50,000 cash reward to anyone who can provide information leading to the location of the storeowner—dead or alive. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

12 Huge 'ice' busts

The year saw more Chinese nationals arrested for trafficking methamphetamine or "ice." But it was also the period in which joint and federal local law enforcers made the biggest drug bust in CNMI history with the arrest of two Chinese nationals over the shipment of $4.3 million worth of "ice."

A few months later, three more Chinese nationals were arrested over alleged another shipment of $850,000 worth of "ice."

The separate cases against the suspects are now pending in the U.S. District Court for the NMI. No bail was imposed on all defendants.

Yuliu Liu and Zhenlin Fang, two overstaying Chinese male tourists, were arrested in July after the seizure of a shipment of over 10,700 grams of methamphetamine or "ice" worth between $3.2 million and $4.3 million that was concealed in an air-compressor

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN
PUBLIC NOTICE

To Our Valued Guests:

Due to high occupancy, PIC Waterpark passes will not be available for purchase from January 2 to 15, 2016. In addition, PIC Waterpark and Lunch/Brunch Promo will not be available too. Pre-purchased Gift Certificates, PTC and Triple J passes will be honored.

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As 2015 comes to a close, we look back and reflect on the blessings the year has bestowed upon us… as well as the hardships we challenged that brought our people and our islands together.

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aboard a container from Guangzhou, China.

Customs inspectors recovered plastic packages of "ice" weighing approximately 23 lbs or 10,617 grams, while joint local and federal investigators seized 130 grams of "ice" from Liu's residence in Chalan Piao during a follow-up operation.

On July 17, 2015, during a routine inspection of a shipping container from Guangzhou, China, a CNMI Customs inspector noticed an air-compressor listed to a "Han Lu" that appeared to have been tampered with. Using a fiber optic camera to look inside the tank, Customs inspectors saw a package containing a crystal-like substance that later tested presumptive positive for "ice."

In the second drug bust, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency agents arrested in December three Chinese nationals after the CNMI Division of Customs seized 4.9 lbs of methamphetamine or "ice" worth $850,000 last Dec. 2. Arrested were Xi Huang, Shicheng Cai, and Zhaopeng Chen.

According to Customs, the recovery of the 4.9 lbs of "ice" happened during routine inspection of a 40-foot container from Guangzhou, China, at the Port of Saipan last Dec. 2.

The container had several consignees and was brought in by Sunleader, a cargo consolidating company on Saipan. One of the consignees brought in nine five-gallon paint containers, and one was found to have three plastic bags that contained the drug. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

13 Aero Dolphins national champs 2nd time

For the second time in a span of three years, Marianas High School's Aeronautical Dolphins bested Real World Design Challenge competitors from all over the United States and U.S. territories to bag a $50,000 scholarship from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, presenting their design via teleconference in November and receiving word of their victory within days.

The winning team consists of junior and senior students: project manager Ann Margaret Norcio, mission planner Matthew Cao, project mathematician Masrur Alam, marketing specialist Edna

See AERO on Page 10

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New Achievements.

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AERO

From Page 9

Nisola, simulations engineer Jun Young Kim, and design engineer Robert Malate. They are led by MHS mathematics teacher and coach John Raulerson, with team collaboration between professionals in aero-structures, aero-dynamics, mechanical engineering, and pilot industries.

The 2015 National Real World Design Challenge was to design an unmanned aircraft system capable of targeted dispersal of fluid pesticides—a design process of three phases that the students started in April.

The unmanned aircraft system, named Skywalker, produces extremely coarse droplets suitable for wind speeds of up to 20 mph using an extended spray broom that compensates for any geographical variables on a crop field of sweet potatoes, a system whose use equals up to $15.5 million in net cash flow after five years of use.

The onslaught of Typhoon Soudelor as well as the breakdown of the undersea fiber optic cable forced the team to work longer hours to make up for lost time.

Raulerson expressed that hard work and endurance allowed them to prevail and come this far, adding that the accomplishment was a major win for this small island in the Pacific. ***(Daisy Demapan)***

Expeditionary Marines to train in Guam

DEDEDO, Guam—The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit is scheduled to participate in a live-fire Realistic Urban Training Exercise, or RUTEX, in Guam from Jan. 6 to 16 in preparation for the unit's deployment to the Asia-Pacific late this year.

The purpose of RUTEX is to train the 31st MEU's Marines to coordinate with local law enforcement agencies and civic leaders to operate in an urban environment and hone their proficiency to respond to threats to a community or its infrastructure.

The training in Guam will be held at South Finegayan Housing and near the Tanguisson Power Plant in Dededo. Residents of the island could see Marines periodically throughout the exercise and are likely to notice increased military activities operating in this area on Jan. 13 and 15.

Since August of this year, planners for the exercise have coordinated through the appropriate territorial and village agencies and officials to ensure safety and minimize the impact on the community. Some of these agencies include the Offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor, Guam Fire Department, Guam Police Department, the Offices of Guam Homeland Security and Civil Defense as well as the FBI and Guam Federal Aviation Administration.

"Working in this relatively unfamiliar environment is critical to our success and the safety of the Marines we train," said Col. Romin Dasmalchi, commander of the 31st MEU. "As the nation's only permanently deployed Marine Expeditionary Unit, we must be able to react with little or no notice to threats in urban communities." ***(MEU)***

14 Brutal attack on Dr. Claassens

The peaceful island of Rota was rocked with the news that William Kapono Mathewson allegedly beat up and stabbed Dr. Francois Claassens with a fishing spear in the neck last April 4.

The brutal attack happened in the backyard of Claassens' house in Teneto Village. Mathewson's house is located near the doctor's residence.

Claassens has miraculously recovered from his injuries.

Mathewson was immediately arrested, but as of yesterday, there were still no word whether the Office of the Public Defender has been able to seek an expert psychiatrist who can examine Mathewson.

The conference on the status regarding finding an expert psychiatrist has been postponed several times. The case is not moving forward because until now he has yet to be examined by a psychiatrist.

Last April 29, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho granted the request of assistant public defender Michael Sato to appoint a psychiatrist who will examine Mathewson.

In requesting for a psychiatrist, Sato disclosed that Mathewson will rely upon the defense of insanity at the time when he committed the alleged crime.

Mathewson, 43, a farmer/fisherman, allegedly stabbed the 60-year-old Claassens in the neck with a fishing spear and clubbed him on the head with a big pot and chain. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

15 Body of missing Jack found

Traina Suda Jack, 18, was last seen in San Antonio on Oct. 22, 2014. Her body was recovered about seven months later, on May 11, in a jungle area about 15 feet from the shoulder of the road across the Torres Farm near Obyan Beach.

It was a cattle manager who saw her remains.

No one has been arrested in Jack's death. The cause of her death has yet to be established.

A source said microscopic analysis on bone fragments from the skull failed to determine Jack's cause of death.

Guam chief medical examiner Dr. Aurelio Espinola positively identified the remains as that of Jack's, using a photograph that showed her dental features.

Police also recovered from the scene short pants, bra, and wristband that has the word "MUSIC." Jack's father and his sister identified the items as belonging to Jack.

Espinola's autopsy did not reveal any type of identifiable trauma on the bones such as fracture, stab, or gunshot.

The family and relatives later buried Jack's remains at the Tanapag Cemetery. The family urged the killer to surrender to authorities and appealed to the Department of Public Safety to continue their investigation. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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NOTICE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

(December 31, 2015)

Pursuant to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently published FY 2016 Fair Market Rent (FMR), which took effect on December 11, 2015, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) wants to respectfully inform the general public that there has been a decrease in the FY 2016 FMR. As a result of this decrease, NMHC's FY 2016 Payment Standards shall be effective for all FY 2016 New Admission and Other Change-of-Unit (Unit Transfer) certifications that occur after December 11, 2015. Based on 24 CFR 982.505, for participants undergoing an annual recertification, the FY 2016 Payment Standards shall take effect for the family beginning at the effective date of the family's second regular reexamination following the effective date of the decrease in the payment standard amount.

Thank you and please direct all questions regarding this public notice to the following individuals:

1. Saipan Office – Telephone Numbers: 234-6866 or 234-9447
   - David Chargualaf, PHD Manager
     email: phdmanager@nmhcgov.net
2. Tinian Field Office – Telephone Number: 433-9213
   - Frances Diaz, Tinian Field Office Representative
     email: tiniannmhc@nmhcgov.net
3. Rota Field Office – Telephone Number: 532-9410
   - Arvin Ogo, Rota Field Office Representative
     email: ropnmhc@nmhcgov.net

What's your wish for the New Year?

Saipan Tribune asked members of the community what they wish for the CNMI in the upcoming year amidst several obstacles during the past year.

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

"I wish for everyone in the CNMI to have a prosperous New Year and to look ahead to all the windows of opportunities in life. Share the gift of giving, whether it be a doll for a little girl or moral support for a 60-year-old man who decides to go back to school."

—Maria Takai, San Vicente

"My New Year's wish for the CNMI is to have a better awareness of preparedness for all types of disasters so that our people do not relive the disaster we have just experienced from Soudelor. I hope and pray that everyone fill their hearts with love, peace, happiness, understanding and forgiveness for the New Year. God Bless!"

—Rose Taimanao Jones, Kagman

See WISH on Page 12

Weekend Food Fair!
Indulge in a festive evening of local and international cuisines.

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Saipan

Please note that January 1st, 2016 Friday is closed.
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WISH

From Page 11

"I wish for the CNMI to finally have elected officials, who carry out his/her promises to the community and furthermore improve the economy and for elected officials to not be blinded by the incoming money that it is receiving for a dangerous price that might harm the CNMI in the long run."

—Viron Tenorio, Kagman

"My New Year's wish for the CNMI is for everyone to know and seek God. He is our healer, our Father, and our King. Without Him we are incomplete. As we welcome the New Year 2016 we shall greet one another with love and kindness. We shall seek Jesus our Lord for strength, guidance, and protection among this upcoming year. To everyone out there, stay positive. Stay safe and may the Lord God bless you and your family. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come! *(2 Corinthians 5:17)* I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. *(Philippians 4:13.)*"

—Delores Mendiola, Kagman

"My New Years wish is for the CNMI to offer more fair-paying job opportunities so that our students currently studying abroad can actually have a reason to come and work at home. Too many jobs prefer higher education but pay peanuts, forcing many to work for the Public School System. No one wins with the status quo."

—Del Eloise Mendiola, Koblerville

"I wish that everyone will still find joy this season in spite of their loss."

—Richard Aldan, As Matuis

"My New Year's wish for the CNMI is for the new governor to lead us in the right direction and for more transparency and victory against corruption."

—Margie Camu, Koblerville

"My New Year's wish is to improve our cost of living so we can move forward and not backwards! Go green and recycle!

—Leilani Sablan Deleon Guerrero, San Roque

"I wish 2016 will bring more stability to the entire island economically, politically, socially, and personally."

—Josephine Mesta, Kagman

"My wish is that despite all the challenges the CNMI community faced during 2015, that we all remain hopeful for the best this coming year. Also, that we continue working toward a better future for the islands."

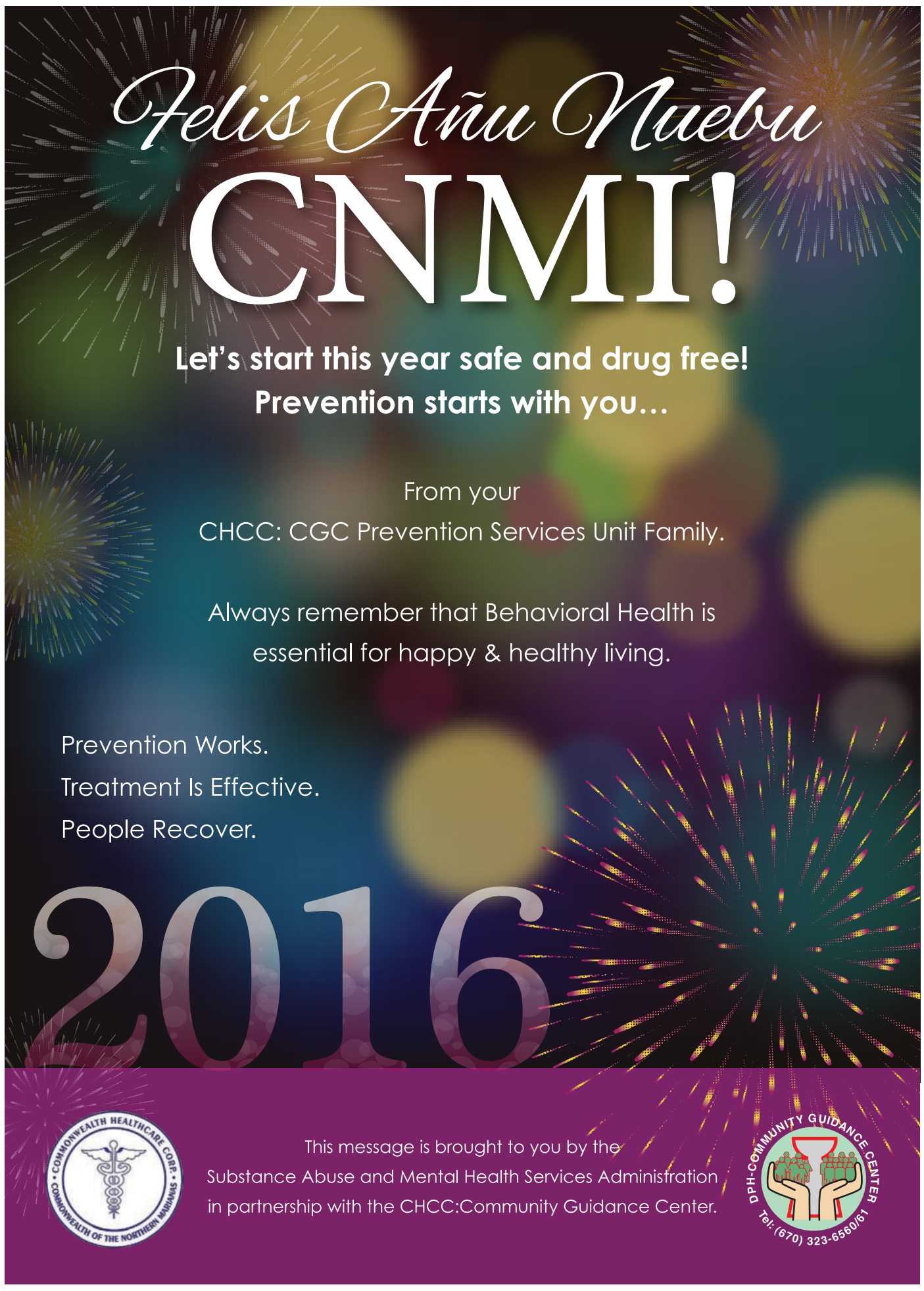
—Querlaine Blas, San Vicente

"I wish that all the CW's be approved and for better status in the future."

—Tina Doctor, Chalan Laulau

"My wish for the New Year is to have a baby!"

—Donna Rivera, San Vicente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2016

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

The naughty and nice of 2015

So many lumps of coal, so little time. We've seen a lot of mischief and bad behavior this year, from mean-spirited campaign pledges to deceptive diesel engines to stubbornly profligate water use. (And that's not even counting the truly evil deeds of 2015, starting with the Charlie Hebdo killings and running through the massacre in San Bernardino.) But like Santa's tally, our Naughty ledger has a Nice counterpart, and this year the names included those of an unflappable police chief and, yes, a couple of politicians.

Naughty

■ Volkswagen, which brazenly duped regulators and buyers alike with software that turned off smog controls on its supposedly environmentally friendly diesel-powered cars.

■ Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis, who blasted through the metaphorical wall between church and state by refusing marriage licenses to gay couples because she believes homosexuality to be a sin.

■ Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who called for a ban on immigration into the U.S. by Muslims, in effect saying the government should presume every Muslim outside its borders is a terrorist. An additional lump for his rival Ben Carson, for saying American voters shouldn't elect a Muslim president.

■ The Wet Prince of Bel Air—the still-anonymous water waster found by the Center for Investigative Reporting to be sloshing his, her, their or its way through enough water to serve 90 average single-family homes—in the midst of a historic drought.

■ Martin Shkreli, the former chief executive of Turing Pharmaceuticals, for buying the rights to an anti-parasitic drug crucial to some patients with malaria or HIV, then raising the price from $13.50 to $750 per pill.

■ Melissa Click, an assistant professor at the University of Missouri, who tried to chase a student journalist away from a gathering of protesters by shouting "Who wants to help me get this reporter out of here? I need some muscle over here."

■ Walter Palmer, the Minnesota dentist and big-game hunter who killed Cecil, a beloved and well-known lion, outside a protected habitat in Zimbabwe.

■ The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, for taking a big step backward by reasserting direct authority over county departments and disempowering the county's chief executive officer.

■ Lawyers for the city of San Juan Capistrano, whose defense against a taxpayer lawsuit led an appellate court to strike down the city's tiered water rate stricture—thereby jeopardizing all water agencies' most effective means of encouraging conservation.

■ Mayor James T. Butts Jr. and the members of the Inglewood City Council, who approved a giant football stadium without a vote of the people, unsuccessfully sued a local gadfly for using snippets of council meeting footage in YouTube videos, and shifted council meetings from the evening to the early afternoon when it would be harder for the public to attend.

■ The Southwestern Voter Registration Project, for trying to increase turnout in an L.A. school board election by staging a lottery for voters with $25,000 in cash prizes.

■ President Obama, who, on the centennial of the Armenian

See NAUGHTY on Page 15

Magof Tinituhon i Sakkan

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

New Year in China is observed twice. Jan. 1 of the solar calendar is for merchants as they hawk their wares like they do at Christmas and Thanksgiving. China apes anything that the West dangles before its eyes, and the shopping malls are crowded.

My in-laws have a coffee maker. "Since when did you start drinking coffee," I asked. The answer: "We don't, but the machine was on sale!" Jijia, our local department store, has jackets on sale at 50 percent off. It does not indicate the figure from which the 50 percent is taken from. The word "sale" is enough magic.

The population observes the lunar one on Feb. 8. That is when families gather as clan. Many live in the city, unable to bring their family to their ghetto hovel, so they go home for their annual visit new year. Couples who do not have kids yet travel; Saipan is a popular destination in the middle of winter. The cost of plane tickets rose 10 percent to adjust supply on demand.

On solar New Year, Pinas shoot pyrotechnics in the sky before midnight, light *bawang* (firecrackers with the big boom), or point the gun upwards, with lead raining back down at a faster rate than when they went up as a consequence. In Honolulu where *bawang* is regulated, it is the Filipino enclaves that smell of rotten eggs, or technically, sulfuric nitrates. Pinas welcomes New Year with a bang.

We spent solar New Year in Shenyang where the neighborhood we live in was relatively quiet. The Chinese tradition of lighting firecrackers accents levity rather than hostility, now formally outlawed, or rather the government would do the lighting up of the skies, thank you, but I suspect the boom-boom lighters are naturally kept cold on solar New Year until the lunar New Year when skies flares up with lights, government regulations favorable or not.

Our neighborhood is a housing development where the units are fully subscribed to but not occupied as China's hoarded capital earned since 1985 went out to buy units sold on the hope of making it an investment. With only about eight of the 37 buildings occupied, and the other units dark while the neighboring lot awaits a ribbon cutting ceremony, HK Hutchinson's Huiland Development is a community of young couples with one or two kids, and elderly parents tending the investment of their absentee children.

I left the solar New Year of China to itself but since the lunar one will not be commonly observed on Saipan, except by the diehard members of the Sinosphere community, I did my solar New Year's turn feasting.

There is the matter of anticipating the next 365 days. Since we have become servants of timeframes, we regulate our lives through calendar days, weeks, months, and the four seasons on the temperate zone, though I've seen woolen sweaters, blankets and hoodies on the first sign of cold on Saipan (that'd be across the 70 degree Fahrenheit line), the sweatshirt worn not for the warmth but for the fashion. The plastic fibers are much warmer than the old cotton ones. Since most of the days on Saipan are just either dry or wet, it's the umbrella that reigns, the cut-off pants and shirts dominate.

Still, by the way DFS markets its wares, the wears of winter are just as prominently displayed as the ones we actually wear on island. Of course, we have tourists from the temperate zones that do their shopping for the cold while on Saipan so there is a market for the cold winter attires and accessories.

It is the bang of our souls that got me a-tweeter (no, I do not tweet on Twitter but my soul hit high frequency) this New Year. Most of the previous year has been a time of transition, dramatically occasioned by the Aug. 2 epiphany of Soudelor that wiped all expectations, employ and income generation, off the board. At 70, it comes as a challenge to recreate one's survival systems. We are hard work at that.

2016 begins our journey to the last 16-year phase of our existence projected to be on the 15th day of December 2031. My students are often bewildered how I can be so nonchalant about naming the day I shall "die," which is really an affirmation that my chosen 86-year length of existence is a choice I am holding myself accountable for, and anything beyond that is *c'est la vie* to the fairies. Of the 86 though, there shall be no excuses. I am 100 percent responsible.

Aye, there's the rub. Whatever happened to the will of the infinite? To me, it is easy and clear. I was given cosmic permission to decide, and go for it!

That's what's 2016 is going to be, an arena where we conserve that which is still useful, create the new when necessary, innovate when an improvement is called for, establish a system or structure when required in place. Bewailing misfortunes, rehearsing bad turns, and wishing what is not there, are waste of energy.

A couple of colleagues inventoried their physical shortcomings that are habitual, and decided that they are not going to be distractions. Ditto. *Happy beginning of the year!*

Blah Week coming down

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com. His column usually runs every Friday. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

"Golden Week" is tied to Asian holiday and tourism action, so it needs no introduction to Saipan Tribune readers.

So allow me to present another week, one that doesn't carry the sparkle of golden notions: Blah Week. Well, that's what I call it, anyway.

What is Blah Week? It's the awkward span between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, both of which are defined as federal holidays. So the days themselves enjoy official status, but they bookmark an interval that is lost territory.

I grew up with this calendar so I didn't used to give it much thought. It is, of course, hardly universal, and some nations have weeklong holidays that are opportune times for families to get together. With this in mind, someone asked me what time of year Americans observe this rite.

That's a good question. I don't have a good answer. We have the occasional three-day weekend, but nothing nearly on the order of a weeklong holiday. I mean "holiday" in the American sense of an officially fixed day on everyone's calendar as opposed to what Americans call "vacation."

As for vacation time, it's a floating target and not the same as a statutory holiday. Vacation doesn't always have a lot of juice. When I worked in the corporate world I recall that two weeks of annual vacation were the standard benefit for many rank-and-file jobs, but not even this assured time off during any given period, since the peak vacation times often went to the more senior employees.

I've seen more than a few cases where the best a family can do is have a two-day stay together, with travel taking up a day on the front end plus another day on the back end, for a total of a four-day span.

Fortunately, many families fare better than that, especially if geographic proximity, job seniority, or scheduling flexibility put some aces in the deck.

Me, I've never gotten wound up about this stuff. I'm a sucker for the holidays, but I've marked many a Christmas sitting in my beach chair with my toes stuck in the sand. That's just fine with me. I don't feel compelled to travel for leisure if it's going to cause me the slightest amount of aggravation or exertion. I'll save that stress for working situations. Outside of that, no thanks.

Still, no matter how laidback I am about things, I have to recognize that Blah Week can make some types of work difficult. After all, much of the working world is caught straddling an interruption of the holidays, and the mindset and circumstances don't promote peak efficiency.

This applies mostly to office work, I'll note. There are, by contrast, many industries that are used to working around-the-clock and around-the-calendar, so they pretty much get to escape the blahs.

If nothing else, Blah Week provides a quiet time to gently tally the year's events. Easing out of a year seems sensible to me, unless you're so busy that you can't be bothered with such notions, which is even better.

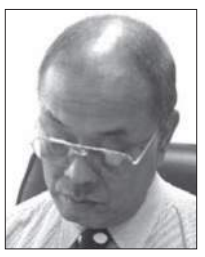
Meanwhile, if you ever want to really stew in a case of the blahs, then listen to Johnny Cash sing *Sunday Morning Coming Down*. That mournful song captures the blahs so well that it'll drop a fuzzy ball of them down your shirt when you hear it.

So much for Blah Week. It's not really bad, it's more like awkward, being neither a holiday, nor a normal working week, and, well, whatever it is, or isn't, another one is coming down.

Receding Year 2015

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.



The financial crisis of the CNMI may not be fully apparent to most people. But as the New Year dawns the severity of the fiscal mess—and how it would impact family pocketbooks—should become much clearer to many. Without cutting spending, the towering debts could turn into an avalanche.

Before and after the superstorm the CNMI was already gasping for air in the filthy swamp of bankruptcy. Came speeches of poverty as a prelude to raiding MPLT funds or bond flotation to help finance settlement fund that is a challenge under current fiscal crisis.

Shortfall: The projected FY 2016 budget would be saddled with a budgetary shortfall of not less than $150 million. The latter would reveal serious shortages after the 80 and 25 percent are deducted for operations (salaries) and PSS, respectively. There's none for all others.

The need for more money would leave this administration combining genuflection and mea culpa 24/7. Budgetary shortfall would become its 2015 *annus horibilis*—a disastrous issue—under the pretense that everything's fine. It's a tough fiscal crisis given that as its effects metastasize or spreads in 2016 it would adversely affect family pocketbooks in the midst of a heavily depressed economy.

Options: Interesting what plans the administration would implement to cut down bloated government expenses. Options include cut in operations, reduction in force or borrow money to cover shortfalls. The first isn't likely going to happen given that 2016 is the midterm election. The second choice would be impossible given that the private sector isn't doing well. The last looks suspiciously like a good option but it would equally saddle our young people with debts that ruin their future before reaching the pinnacle of their career.

Evacuation: The net effect of bankruptcy is the disappearance of decent opportunities for our people for meaningful employment to raise their families. It would trigger "evacuation" to other venues across the country where opportunities abound for them. It suffocates investment when the local government turns into the slaves of rich donors at the expense of other significant investors. This is bad all around.

The NMI being a major employer with a good number of its people on food stamps and Medicaid you quiz how would it pay for these external assistance if it were required to begin shouldering a greater percentage of the cost of these programs. After fourteen years of earning the same salaries families deserve doesn't need any further assault in what little they earn. It's a fiscal colossus the NMI must pare down!

The Waltz: When the elected elite started waltzing with firms loaded with tons of money it created an unholy relation that effectively alienated our people from them. It's the elite and cronies versus the downtrodden indigents or the marginalized poor.

The middle class is basically non-existent. Some 51 percent of them earn salaries within federal poverty income level. Though not indigent or abject poor, it's a class above the indigent group placed in no man's land and must make do with their meager income. Most are unqualified for federal assistance programs.

The NMI basically accepted a new form of corporate welfare by granting its favorite firm everything from laws to land. I understand wealth and jobs creation but when it's done for one at the expense of others then the equation merits critical review.

The elected elite is clueless how to find decent opportunities so the 51 percent could improve forced conditions riding on economic stagnancy or dystopia—where nothing works—though they struggle to endure the deepening bad times. It builds distrust in government.

Destiny: Hope we're still in control of our destiny. Let's navigate our canoe boldly difficult as it may be. Let's place the cronyism fostered by this administration on our monitor. We must not wholesale tradition in favor of an industry that would gradually destroy our way of life. It's our last shot to take back what's ours!

■■■

Furthermore, it is rumored that foreign firms with tons of money would be bank rolling next year's midterm election. This is to ensure that their ride into paradise isn't hindered in the devious agenda to control and bring our people to submission. This is a form of neocolonialism we must stop at the front door!

■■■

Agenda: The triad's agenda (Fitial/Inos/Torres) to sink the local economy below depressed level has worked down to the letter. The situation kills opportunities for our people to earn decent living with pride. Falling prey to foreign money is almost academic. Without opportunities they'll take it to ease familial hardship. Must eradicate this scourge!

■■■

Are You…? Not surprising the retardant reaction by local legislators who now question the likely adverse effects the huge development in Garapan would have on water, power and sewer in the commercial and immediate communities. I suppose glitz and glamour must have blinded their vision as to overlook a vital issue before the parade moves out of the ground.

Trouble: Elsewhere, the future of Retirement Fund is in shambles. No worries! It's a self-inflicted financial mess we've seen fit to hide since 1983. In other words, governors simply opted to avoid paying employer's contribution to the retirement fund. It has now piled-up to $789 million in unfunded liability. Call it deficit!

Nearby: Tinian's Dynasty has cornered the trophy of bankruptcy with liabilities of some $285 million. What a way to close out the year. Is there a lesson to draw from this experience? Rota must take a second look before it leaps off the cliff. Give Tinian credit, though, for muddling through to revive the industry. For the mind numbing tribulations in 2015 have a blessed Happy New Year's!

NAUGHTY

From Page 14

genocide, refused again to call it for what it was.

■ n The still-unknown person who flew a drone too close to a wildfire near Big Bear last June, forcing firefighters to shut down the air drops and helping spread the destructive Lake Fire.

■ n Former NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams, for trying to become the hero of someone else's story

■ n Tom Brady and the New England Patriots, for sucking some of the air out of pro football.

■ n All the restaurateurs who gleefully resumed selling foie gras after a judge overturned California's restriction on its sale, promoting a product obtained by force-feeding ducks and geese through tubes stuck down their gullets until their livers swell to 10 times their normal size.

Nice

■ The U.S. Congress, for passing the USA Freedom Act and ending the National Security Agency's bulk collection of millions of Americans' telephone records.

■ Pope Francis, for reminding Americans of the importance of welcoming displaced people—in vivid contrast to the xenophobic message delivered by a number of Republican presidential candidates.

■ The Supreme Court, for finding a restriction on election campaign-spending that it could uphold: Florida's ban on judicial candidates personally soliciting campaign funds.

■ The Los Angeles City Council, for requiring that handguns be fitted with trigger locks or secured in boxes or lockers when not in use, and barring ownership of ammunition magazines capable of holding more than 10 cartridges.

■ Prosecutors in the U.S. and Switzerland, for addressing what had been obvious to the international soccer community for years: corruption within FIFA, the international organization governing world soccer.

■ The Supreme Court, for affirming that the right to marriage belongs to all, a large step toward equality for the nation's gay population.

■ The Nebraska Legislature, for voting to end capital punishment in the state.

n The L.A. Planning Commission, for taking a harder, smarter line on billboard regulation and refusing to grant amnesty for illegal signs, despite pressure from lobbyists and little support from the City Council.

n The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Agency, for committing to make 35 percent of the units built on agency land affordable, and to work with cities to plan more walkable, denser and economical communities around transit stations.

n San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan, for exceptional leadership in the most trying circumstances imaginable.

n #blacklivesmatter, for being a catalyst in the protest movement that brought national attention to the killings of unarmed black men by law enforcement officers.

n Congressional leaders, for getting through the year—and raising the debt limit—with nary a threat of a government shutdown. Admittedly, we've lowered the bar.

n Donald Trump, for making the presidential primary race more entertaining this year than ever before in our lifetimes, if scary. Here's hoping he singlehandedly drives voter turnout to record levels by raising passions to a fever pitch—among his opponents as well as his supporters.

n The California Legislature, for rejecting bills that responded to the spurious claims that Proposition 47 legalized the theft of handguns, the possession of date rape drugs or, indeed, any crime.

n Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, for following through on plans to divert people with mental health problems from the criminal justice system.

n The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, for recognizing that homelessness is fed by holes in county programs like foster care, probation, jails, mental health and healthcare, and for beginning to spend its money and tailor its services to solve those problems comprehensively.

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MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

PCF Hawaii educational mission: One for the ages

Last of a two-part series.

The East West Center and the Polynesian Cultural Center served as the focal points for the third day sessions. For the meetings at the EWC, the Fellows were joined once again by their counterparts from Hawaii. The Center, which was opened during JFK's administration and has hosted leaders of our nation and foreign heads of states through the years, provided the Fellows with the rare opportunity to meet with Dr. Charles Morrison, president of the EWC. A stimulating and timely presentation was then given by two individuals involved with the World Conservation Congress that will be holding its prestigious conference for the first time in the United States—thanks to Hawaii's winning bid. The conference, often described as the "Olympics of Conservation," will be held in Honolulu in September of 2016 with thousands of delegates attending from all over the world. Prior to the conference, Dr. Trisha Kehaulani Watson, a native Hawaiian cultural expert, (Watson also came to Saipan as a guest of the initial class of Fellows) touted a Pacific Islands Summit that will be specifically geared to the nations and territories of Oceania. A highlight of the Summit will be a gathering of *vakas* (canoes) from the Pacific as an acknowledgment of our cultural past with a nod to our future. Experts from the EWC then led the Fellows through a series of briefings on issues affecting the Pacific. With the looming debate in Congress over the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a distinguished panel of diplomats including the consuls general or their representatives from Japan, the Philippines, Korea and Australia shared their respective countries' position on the 12-nation trade pact. The United States' perspective was offered by EWC diplomat in residence Donald Sheehan. Through the presentations and a frank exchange of a question and answer session that followed, the Fellows gained a better understanding of the history and the pros and cons of the TPP. The final portion of the day took the Fellows on a scenic hour ride to Laie on the north shore of Oahu, home of the PCC where they toured the Samoan and Maori villages, dined on another hearty dinner, took in the highly acclaimed evening production, "HA" (the breath of life) and snapped dozens of photographs at Hawaii's No. 1 paid visitor attraction. Seamus Fitzgerald, the chief of the Maori village and the PCC's director of Talent Development, was such a big hit at the opening retreat of the inaugural class of Fellows at the Kanoa Resort last year that he was on the must-see list for the second class to visit with while on their Hawaii trip. He engaged the Fellows in a highly stimulating discussion of leadership from a Polynesian point of view, which blended in the value systems of the Samoan, Tongan, Tahitian, Fijian, Maori and Native Hawaiian cultures with a strong affinity for the family unit. Finally, living up to its billing as the finest Polynesian show in the Pacific, was the production "HA" (the breath of life) featuring a cast of hundreds of students from the nearby BYU-Hawaii campus whose employment at PCC helps subsidize their college educations. The long ride back to Waikiki made for a welcome respite to a fun-filled substantive day.

The mission's final day ended up at Matson Navigation headquarters at the Sand Island Terminal where they were greeted warmly by its senior vice president of the Pacific Division, Vic Angoco, who is of Chamorro and Samoan ancestry. Angoco, a former resident of Guam, was extremely pleased to reconnect with his cultural heritage peers as he waxed eloquent on his experiences and familiarity with the people of the Marianas region. As he hosted the Fellows for breakfast, the personable Matson executive briefed them on a myriad of issues ranging from his leadership style, to an overview of Matson's history of operations, to its role in the recovery of Typhoon Soudelor and to the company's present and future plans for the Pacific region. He also reaffirmed Matson's commitment to being a dominant transportation player in Guam and Saipan. "We are there for you today and will be servicing your needs tomorrow," said Angoco. "Our commitment is long lasting and sincere."

One of the best aspects of the trip was the presence of Tan Holdings honcho and PCF Marianas chair Jerry Tan to accompany the Fellows. Like the Fellows, he was involved and peppered the discussions with substantive questions and shared invaluable insights. Tan, who is well known in the Hawaii business community with private sector leaders who engage in work in Saipan and Guam, added instant credibility to the visiting group of young leaders and it was a statement on how important leadership development and mentoring is regarded in the Marianas region.

With the closing of the second class of Fellow's years fast approaching with a graduation in mid-January, focus will now quickly shift to the recruitment for the 3rd class of Fellows. Alex Sablan, Tan Holdings executive and president of the Saipan Chamber, who also accompanied the Fellows to Hawaii, is hard at work making preparations for the recruitment process to begin. Plans are for the applications to be available in January, the selection to occur in the latter part of February and the opening retreat to be held in mid-March.

I'm not saying this because I'm biased about PCF but if you're in your mid-20s to early 40s and looking for a wonderful year of intellectual stimulation, educational experiences second to none and networking with not only the emerging leadership of the CNMI but the Pacific region as well, please consider applying to become a Pacific Century Fellow. Besides, the application process is free! Stay tuned for further details. In closing, happy New Year and may 2016 be all that you pray and hope for you and your family.

■■■

I join with the people of the Commonwealth and the Marianas region in expressing our heartfelt condolences over the recent passing of Gov. Eloy Inos. My family and I extend our prayers to the Inos family during this difficult time.

He was a strong supporter of the Pacific Century Fellows program in encouraging and supporting some of his talented staff members to become Fellows and never hesitated to meet with them and participate in our programs. The Pacific and Hawaii has lost one of its dear friends. I will miss him dearly.

MARIANAS MATTERS

By MUFI HANNEMANN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Mufi Hannemann is a Harvard-educated former mayor of Honolulu. He is the principal of MFH Enterprises and is the chair and founder of the Pacific Century Fellows program.

Vic Angoco, the part-Chamorro executive of Matson Navigations, welcomes the Fellows to its Sand Island Terminal. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PCF calls on the Maori Village at the Polynesian Cultural Center, Hawaii›s No. 1 paid visitor attraction located on the North Shore of Oahu. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Marines, DFEMS hold mini-firefighter fitness challenge

On Dec. 29, the Department of Fire and EMS had a mini-firefighter fitness challenge for the U.S. Marine Cops recruiting office. Gunnery Sgt. Rodney Deleon Guerrero and four other active duty Marines participated in this fitness challenge as well as eight poolees (a person who has completed and passed the physical, moral, and mental exam for the military and is in the delayed entry program). There were 20 others that partook in the mini firefighter fitness challenge. These young individuals are still in school and are interested in becoming a U.S. Marine in the future. ***(DPS)***

3 Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has red-flagged the DPW Channel Bridge , American Memorial Park, and Puerto Rico dump and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

Samples collected from these locations contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. ***(DEQ)***

Marpi landfill, transfer station schedule

The Lower Base Transfer Station and the Marpi Landfill waste disposal facilities will be closed today, Dec. 31, 2015, at 12pm. On Friday, Jan. 1, 2016, both facilities will close all day in observance of New Year's Day. Regular opening schedule will return on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016, from 7:30am to 11:30am and 12:30pm to 4pm. ***(DPW)***

Military training at FDM, Warning Area 517

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla during the following dates and times:

- Jan. 5, from 10am to 6pm
- Jan. 6-7, from 10am to 5pm
- Jan. 8, from 10am to 6pm

The U.S. Navy will conduct training at Warning Area 517 on Jan. 7, from noon to 8pm

The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear of the areas during the dates and times indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 12-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising of 14,000 nautical square miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. ***(PR)***

May the year
2016
greet you with days as fragrant
as roses, as colorful as a rainbow,
as bright as sunshine and as
happy and cheerful as a lark.
Happy New Year!
From the Management & Staff of
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
MUNICIPALITY OF SAIPAN
UNITED STATES NOV. 4, 1986
Happy New Year To Everyone!
The countdown to welcome in 2016 should also be a time to bid farewell to 2015. We must hold dear in our hearts the memories of 2015, for that will always prepare us for whatever 2016 has in the works for us. Together we will remain as strong as ever; together we will move our Commonwealth forward to greater accomplishments. We must always remember in our prayers our special loved ones who have gone before us, especially our governor, the Honorable Eloy S. Inos, who is now in the company of our Lord.
My staff, our families, and I wish our dear people of this Great Commonwealth a HAPPY NEW YEAR! Let us celebrate responsibly and safely.
Best Wishes,
DAVID M. APATANG
Mayor, Municipality of Saipan

CIP PROGRAM OFFICE, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 969505 | Tel.: (670) 664-2375 | Fax: (670) 664-2408

INVITATION TO BID
ITB16-GOV-032
Parking Lot Paving at the Rota Mayor's Office

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the CIP Program Office are soliciting sealed bids to pave the parking lot at the Rota Mayor's Office on Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project package will be available December 31, 2015 at the CIP Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan. A $50.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. **All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.**

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a pre-bid conference/site visit for this project on January 14, 2016, 9:00 a.m. ChST at the project site. All inquiries regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. ChST, January 19, 2016 to the CIP Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or fax (670) 664-2408. All responses to inquiries will be shared with all prospective contractors.

Sealed bids must be marked ITB16-GOV-032 Parking Lot Paving at the Rota Mayor's Office. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the **Director of Procurement and Supply located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan no later than 9:00 a.m. ChST January 28, 2016.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **9:00 a.m. ChST January 28, 2016** and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 28, 2016 and the bid documents must be received no later than February 05, 2016. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly open and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **10:00 a.m. ChST February 8, 2016.** However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be open at **10:00 a.m. ChST January 28, 2016.**

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen percent (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashier's check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00.

Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:
a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract. Acceptable assets are only:
1) Cash
2) US Government Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is one hundred fifty (150) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be greater of (i) two hundred dollars ($200.00) per day, or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by 150 calendar days, the contract time and will be accessed as delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Ralph DLG. Torres, Governor

Herman S. Sablan, Director
CNMI Procurement & Supply

CIP PROGRAM OFFICE, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 969505 | Tel.: (670) 664-2375 | Fax: (670) 664-2408

INVITATION TO BID
ITB16-GOV-033
Parking Lot Paving at the Rota Department of Public Safety and Fire Station

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the CIP Program Office are soliciting sealed bids to pave the parking lots at the Rota Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Fire Station on Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project package will be available December 31, 2015 at the CIP Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan. A $50.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. **All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.**

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a pre-bid conference/site visit for this project on January 14, 2016, 11:00 a.m. ChST at the project site. All inquiries regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. ChST, January 19, 2016 to the CIP Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or fax (670) 664-2408. All responses to inquiries will be shared with all prospective contractors.

Sealed bids must be marked ITB16-GOV-033 Parking Lot Paving at the Rota DPS and Fire Station. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the **Director of Procurement and Supply located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan** no later than **9:00 a.m. ChST January 28, 2016.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 9:00 a.m. ChST January 28, 2016 and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 28, 2016 and the bid documents must be received no later than February 05, 2016. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

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The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00.

Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:
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1) Cash
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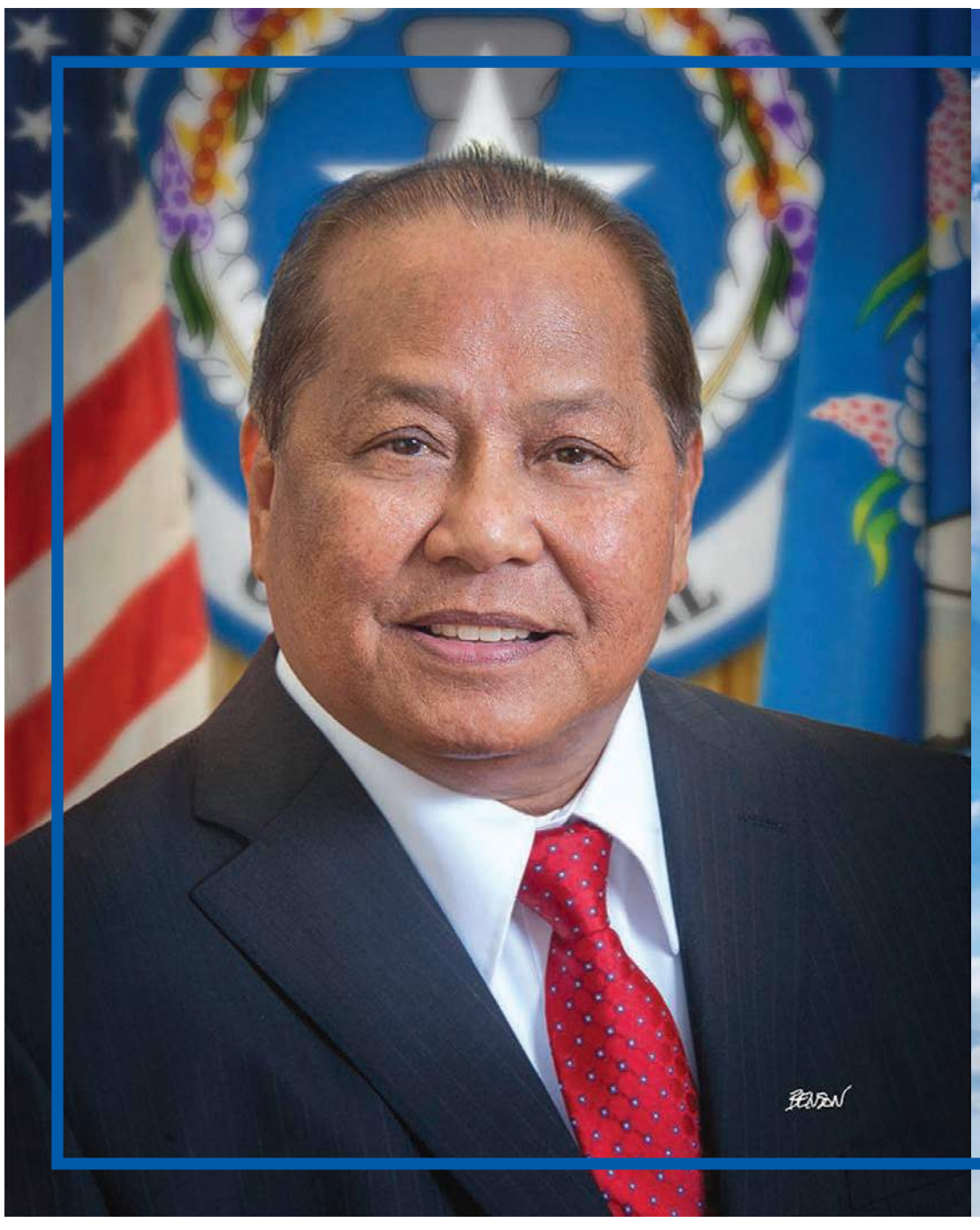
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is one hundred fifty (150) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be greater of (i) two hundred dollars ($200.00) per day, or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by 150 calendar days, the contract time and will be accessed as delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Ralph DLG. Torres, Governor

Herman S. Sablan, Director
CNMI Procurement & Supply



SAIPAN TRIBUNE
JOINS THE REST OF THE
COMMONWEALTH IN
EXPRESSING OUR DEEPEST
SYMPATHIES TO THE FAMILY
AND LOVED ONES OF
GOV. ELOY S. INOS,
WHO LEFT US TOO SOON.
IN THIS HOUR OF OUR
BEREAVEMENT, WE OFFER OUR
PRAYERS FOR HIS ETERNAL
REPOSE IN THE BOSOM
OF THE LORD.

Congratulations!

Jiangbo Li and Qun Wang celebrate their new Christmas baby, Alexander Li, born on December 25, 2015 at 1:22am

Thank you to CHC Doctors, Nurses & Staff for all your kind assistance.

World

AP: Islamic State conflict voted top news story of 2015

NEW YORK (AP)—The far-flung attacks claimed by Islamic State militants and the intensifying global effort to crush them added up to a grim, gripping yearlong saga that was voted the top news story of 2015, according to The Associated Press' annual poll of U.S. editors and news directors.

The No. 2 story was the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that led to legalization of same-sex marriage in all 50 states. But several of the other stories among the Top 10 reflected the impact of the Islamic State, while another group of major stories related to the series of mass shootings in the United States.

Among the 100 voters casting ballots, first-place votes were spread among 17 different stories. The Islamic State entry received 37 first-place votes and same-sex marriage 13. The No. 3 story—the deadly attacks in Paris in January and November—received 14 first-place votes.

A year ago, the top story in AP's poll was the police killings of unarmed blacks in Ferguson, Missouri, and elsewhere—and the investigations and protests that ensued. In this year's poll, a similar entry, with more instances of blacks dying in encounters with police, placed fifth.

AP
In this Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015 file photo, students, staff and faculty are evacuated from Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Ore., after a deadly shooting.

The first AP top-stories poll was conducted in 1936, when editors chose the abdication of Britain's King Edward VIII.

Here are 2015's top 10 stories, in order:

1: ISLAMIC STATE: A multinational coalition intensified ground and air attacks against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, including expanded roles for Western European countries worried about IS-backed terrorism. For its part, IS sought to demonstrate an expansive reach by its operatives and supporters, claiming to have carried out or inspired the bombing of a Russian airliner, attacks in Beirut and Paris, and the deadly shooting in San Bernardino, California.

2: GAY MARRIAGE: Fifteen years after Vermont pioneered civil unions for same-sex couples, the Supreme Court issued a ruling in June enabling them to marry in all 50 states. Gay-rights activists heralded it as their movement's biggest breakthrough, but there were flashes of disapproval. A county clerk in Kentucky, Kim Davis, spent a few days in jail after refusing to issue marriage licenses to gay couples in her jurisdiction.

3: PARIS ATTACKS: The first attack came just a week into the new year. Two brothers who called themselves members of al-Qaida barged into the offices of the satiric newspaper Charlie Hebdo, and later attacked a Jewish market, gunning down 17 people in all. Nov. 13 brought a far deadlier onslaught: Eight Islamic State militants killed 130 people in coordinated assaults around Paris. Targets included restaurants, bars and an indoor rock concert.

4: MASS SHOOTINGS: Throughout the year, mass shootings brought grief to communities across the U.S. and deepened frustration over the failure to curtail them. There were 14 victims in San Bernardino. Nine blacks were killed by a white gunman at a Charleston, South Carolina, church; a professor and eight students died at an Oregon community college. In Chattanooga, four Marines and a sailor were killed by a Kuwaiti-born engineer; three people, including a policeman, were shot dead at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado.

5: BLACK DEATHS IN ENCOUNTERS WITH POLICE: In Baltimore, riots broke out after the death of Freddie Gray, a black man loaded into a van by police officers. In Chicago, Tulsa and North Charleston, South Carolina, fatal police shootings of black men prompted resignations and criminal charges. The incidents gave fuel to the Black Lives Matter campaign, and prompted several investigations of policing practices.

6: TERRORISM WORRIES: Fears about terrorism in the U.S. surged after a married couple in California—described by investigators as radicalized Muslims—carried out the attack in San Bernardino that killed 14 people. The rampage inflamed an already intense debate over whether to accommodate refugees from Syria, and prompted Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump to call for a ban on Muslims coming to the U.S.

7: US ELECTION CAMPAIGN: A large and varied field of Republicans launched bids for the presidency, with billionaire Donald Trump moving out to an early lead in the polls and remaining there despite a series of polarizing statements. He helped attract record audiences for the GOP's televised debates. In the Democratic race, Bernie Sanders surprised many with a strong challenge of Hillary Clinton, but she remained the solid front-runner.

8: CLIMATE CHANGE: Negotiators from nearly 200 countries reached a first-of-its kind agreement in Paris on curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Many questions remain over enforcement and implementation of the accord. But elated supporters hailed it as a critical step toward averting the grim scenario of unchecked global warming.

9: CHARLESTON CHURCH SHOOTING: A Bible study session at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, suddenly turned into carnage when a white gunman opened fire, killing nine blacks, including the pastor. The alleged killer's affinity for the Confederate flag sparked debate over the role of Civil War symbols in today's South. In less than a month, the flag was removed from the South Carolina State House grounds.

10: EUROPE'S MIGRANT CRISIS: Fleeing war and hardship, more than 1 million migrants and refugees flooded into Europe during the year, overwhelming national border guards and reception facilities. Hundreds are believed to have drowned; 71 others were found dead in an abandoned truck in Austria. The 28-nation European Union struggled to come up with an effective, unified response.

On behalf of the Owners, Management and Staff of Club 88,
we would like to extend our most sincere condolences at the loss of
the much loved and respected leader of the CNMI.

Honorable Governor Eloy S. Inos.

Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers go out to his family and loved ones during this very difficult time.

TENDERLY
May time heal your sorrow
GENTLY
May friends ease your pain
SOFTLY
May peace replace heartaches
And may warmest memories remain.

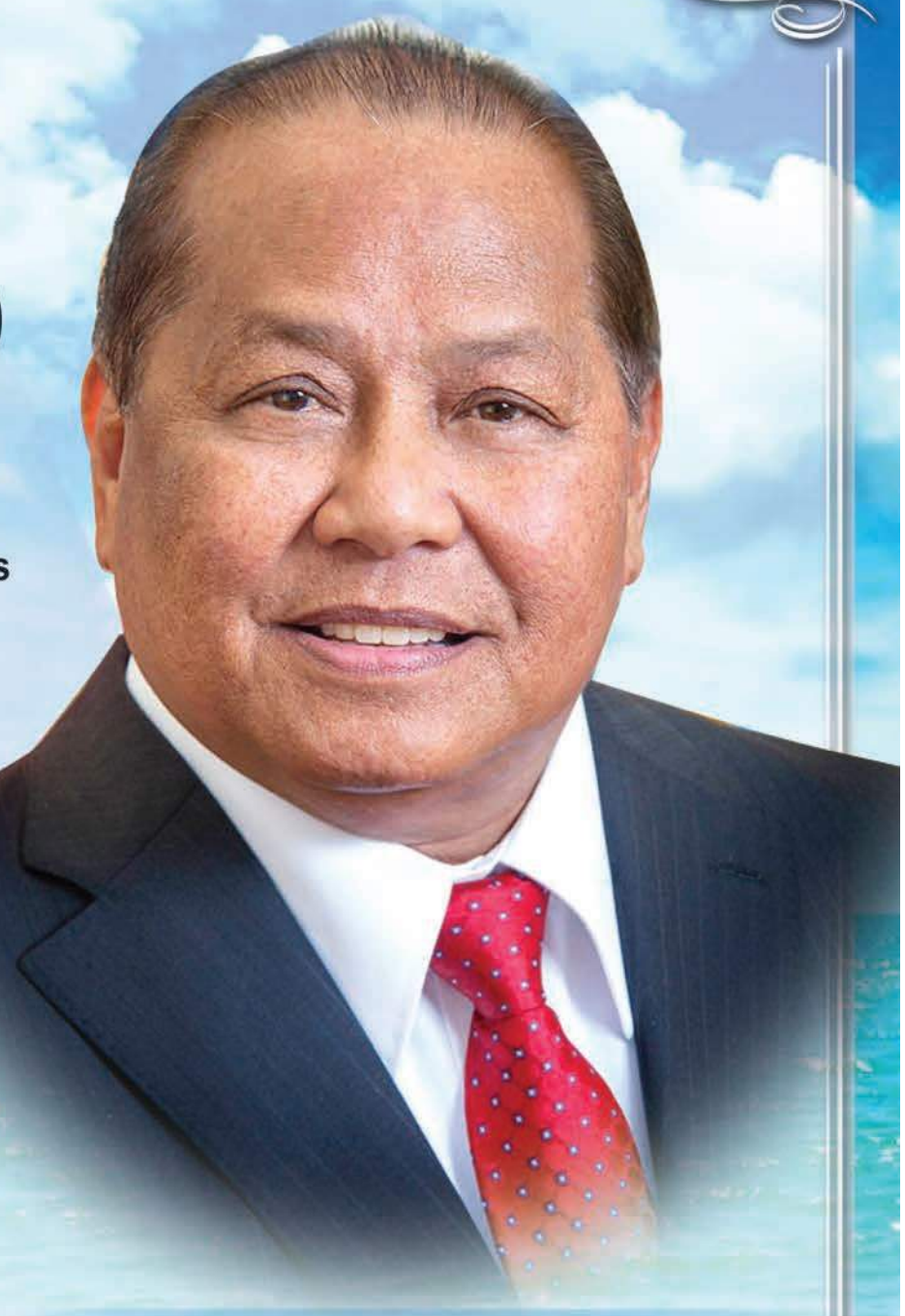
DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT

In God's Care

†EULOGIO (ELOY) SONGAO INOS

Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Born to Life on September 26, 1949
Called to his Eternal Life by our Dear Lord on Monday, December 28, 2015
(Seattle, Washington time) & Tuesday, December 29, 2015 (Saipan time)



In His New Life, He now Joins His:

Wife: Dolores Agulto Inos
Parents: Vicente Atalig Inos and Ana Songao Inos
Parents-in-Law: Thomas Concepcion Agulto and Ana Barcinas Agulto
Brother: Marcus Songao Inos
Reared Daughter: Katherine Agulto Deleon Guerrero
Sisters-in-Law: Dianne Masga Inos, Dr. Rita Hocog-Inos, Maria Barcinas Agulto and Modesta Agulto Bartolo
Brothers-in-Law: Pedro Barcinas Agulto and Jesus Barcinas Agulto
Niece: Ana Blossom Hocog Inos-MacDuff

His Spirit and Memories will Live Forever in the Hearts of His:

Children:
Dora Anne Inos Deleon Guerrero (Gerald J. Deleon Guerrero)
Desirae Dionne, Gerald John and Eloy Thomas
Elaine Michelle A. Inos (Joel S. Borja)
Jordan Esabella
Eloise Kay A. Inos
Christine Mae A. Inos (Parker Yobei)
Mia Danielle
Fleuretta Jean A. Inos
Zeno C. Deleon Guerrero (Tina Sakisat)
Tasha Rae, Zeno, Jr., Crystal, Francisco and Bella

Brothers & Sisters-in Law:
Cristobal S. Inos (Barbara A. Torres) & Children
Joseph S./Lucinda S. Inos & Children
Esther I./Jose S. Basa & Children
Juanita I./Ramon L. Takai & Children
Rufin S./Thelma B. Inos & Children
Lucy I./Ramon M. Sablan & Children

Brothers-in Law:
Jose B. Agulto (Francine) & Children
Pedro Bartolo & Children

Sister-in Law: Dolores M. Agulto & Children
Family friend: Marita A. Corpuz

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."

— Nelson Mandela

He is additionally survived by numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, godchildren and will be greatly missed by many.

Daily Mass is being offered at 6:00 a.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral.
From January 2nd through January 6th, nightly rosary will be at 7:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral.

Funeral announcement will be made at a later date.

Un Dangkulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay and Thank you
The Children and Family

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. **16-001**

Opening Date: **Friday, December 25, 2015**
Closing Date: **Thursday, January 07, 2016**

Trades Technician
(Diesel Power Plant Mechanic)

DUTIES: This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Power Generation. Primary duties are as a TRADES TECHNICIAN MECHANIC: Performs maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs in assigned area of responsibility; provides technical guidance regarding assigned functions; and ensures quality service levels in accordance with proper procedures; Provide assistances in monitoring and complying with regulatory compliance; Operates specialized and heavy equipment; performs maintenance activities and skilled repairs to equipment, infrastructure and/or other items of assigned area of responsibility; Identifies issues and operational concerns; performs inspections; provides troubleshooting; evaluates corrective measures or options; recommends and implements solutions and corrective actions; Receives trouble calls; responds to requests and provides information or status updates. Initiates requests for the replenishment of materials and supplies; cleans, organizes and maintains work and supply areas; Analyzes readings of equipment; maintains records, logs, orders, data, and prepares reports; Perform reconditioning of used parts; Perform alignment of pumps and motors at auxiliary sites; Bending, cutting, grinding and fabricating various types of materials; Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION : Power Generation, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
(If needed, there may be periodic assignment to other divisions of CUC and/or other islands.)
SALARY : $20,826-$28,115 per annum.
POSITIONS : Three (3)
CONTRACT : Not Contracted.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: Technical Education in diesel mechanics or related field desired, High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education. Must demonstrate having had (A) 4 years of increasingly responsible experience performing mechanic duties on 1,500 HP or larger diesel prime mover engines and associated auxiliary units. Experience on Mitsubishi MAN, EMD, Cummins and/or Nordberg diesel engines desired but not required. Knowledge of: Mechanical principles, practices and procedures of assigned service area; Mathematical concepts; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Skill in: Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work of various plant systems; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining historical data; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Work primarily inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work; exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A.
Tel. Nos. (670) 235-7025 to 32 Fax (670) 235-5131

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. **16-002**

Opening Date: **Friday, December 25, 2015**
Closing Date: **Thursday, January 07, 2016**

Trades Assistant

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. Assists with the safe and efficient operation of all plant equipment and machinery including, but not limited to, incinerators, generators, operation of valves, plant production operations, and unloading of diesel fuel tank trucks to storage tanks. -Primary duties are as a TRADES ASSISTANT MECHANIC: Follows all safety and operations procedures during operations and maintenance activities; Monitoring Plant systems as assigned; Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection; Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used; Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete; Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports; Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily work activities; Assisting with equipment inspections, cleaning, corrosion control, and painting; Operating incinerators; oil and water separator pump, servicing and preparing oil filters; Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing debris and housekeeping; Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION : Power Generation, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
(If needed, there may be periodic assignment to other divisions of CUC and/or other islands.)
SALARY : $16,742.00 per annum.
CONTRACT : Not Contracted.
POSITION(S) : Ten (10)

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS. Training and knowledge in operations repair, and maintenance of power generating and/or industrial equipment/facilities desired but not required. Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology. Skills in: Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Must Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Work inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work. Work in environments exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities. Must be available to work a 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends and holidays, may be on call for emergency response. Applicants may be tested. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

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P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A.
Tel. Nos. (670) 235-7025 to 32 Fax (670) 235-5131

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. **16-003**

Opening Date: **Friday, December 25, 2015**
Closing Date: **Thursday, January 07, 2016**

Fiscal Technician, Senior

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or his/her designee. May provide lead direction and/or supervise staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Receives, reviews and verifies vendor invoices and statements; service reports; time sheets; payroll information; and/or other payable documentation; ensures completeness and accuracy of calculations and information. Determines general ledger account information or expense allocation information; processes accounts payable or payroll transactions; routes check payment or wire transfer information for approval; posts accounts upon approval. Researches and reviews account, billing or system information; prepares reconciliations of financial data; updates and maintains account or employee data; calculates and prepares financial adjustments or account charge information. Assists internal and external customers with inquiries or account information; receives complaints; researches issues; provides information and explains processes and procedures; recommends resolutions to issues. Retrieves, files and maintains records, documents and tracking spreadsheets; processes purchase orders; prepares reports, work orders and/or audit confirmations; compiles documents and drafts correspondence. May provide testimony related to customer account disputes. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION : CFO Division, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY : $22,865.00 per annum to $30,867.00
CONTRACT : Not Contracted.
POSITION(S) : One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Associate's Degree in Accounting or directly related field and 3 years of fiscal support experience. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Research methods; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Receiving, reviewing, posting and reconciling fiscal data or account information; Verifying fiscal data and updating account information; Responding to inquiries, researching information and resolving issues; Performing mathematical calculations and making corrections and adjustments; Researching and preparing account adjustments and related documentation; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, correspondence, reports and records; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Researching account information and providing information regarding billing disputes; Organizing and maintaining records management systems; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants may be tested. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. **16-004**

Opening Date: **Friday, December 25, 2015**
Closing Date: **Thursday, January 07, 2016**

Fiscal Analyst

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or his/her designee. May lead or supervise staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Reviews, accounts for, and prepares various financial data such as: reconciling journal entries; accounts receivable aging; summary billing; accounting accruals; recording fixed asset costs or depreciation; calculating and posting payments, adjustments or allotments; and/or accounts payable invoice payments. May provide guidance, coordination and/or supervision of daily accounting activities. Monitors, reconciles and maintains general ledger accounts; prepares and posts journal entries during account closing periods. Performs analysis, verifies fiscal data, and prepares various management reports; provides inventory monitoring and status reports; reviews purchase order status, vendor statements, and performs quality checks for verification of services or materials received. Provides analytical support to internal and external customers and stakeholders; reviews documents and provides guidance in completion of forms; responds to inquiries or issues; researches and provides information on processes and procedures. Assists with annual audits by preparing schedules, reports and providing technical support. May provide supervision or coordination of physical inventory processes; reconciliation of inventory balances in preparation for financial reporting; and/or monitoring vehicle maintenance schedules and approving vehicle repairs and maintenance. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION : CFO Division, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY : $37,756 per annum to $50,970.00 per annum.
CONTRACT : Not Contracted.
POSITION(S) : One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or directly related field and 2 years of fiscal experience related to area of assignment. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Generally accepted accounting principles; Financial analysis principles and techniques; Advanced mathematical concepts; Research methods; Customer service principles; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Providing guidance and leading work activities (based on assignment); Prioritizing activities and meeting deadlines; Preparing financial information, adjustments and entries related to general ledger; Researching, compiling, calculating and reconciling data and information; Researching technical issues, solving problems and providing solutions; Monitoring and maintaining fiscal account information and reporting; Reconciling data, preparing adjustments and posting account and journal entries; Providing attention to accuracy and detail; Preparing reports, correspondence and related fiscal documentation; Providing customer service; Providing technical guidance related to financial systems; Maintaining databases and financial records; Assisting with audits, inventory processes and/or equipment maintenance schedules; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants may be tested. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

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Life & Style

'Star Wars' named Associated Press Entertainer of the Year

AP
In this Dec. 16, 2015 file photo, cast members, Lupita Nyong'o, from left, Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, director J.J. Abrams, Carrie Fischer, Adam Driver and Harrison Ford pose for photographers upon arrival at the European premiere of the film "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," in London.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Star Wars" isn't just strong. It's unstoppable.

The revival of the nearly 40-year-old space saga has already dominated the box office and toy shelves. Now, it's also been selected as The Associated Press Entertainer of the Year and is amassing support for Academy Awards consideration.

"Personally, it's been three years of feeling privileged to be part of something that's bigger than all of us," filmmaker J.J. Abrams told the AP in an interview. "This accolade is very much appreciated and no exception to that feeling."

"Star Wars" won the AP's annual Entertainer of the Year contest with a volley of votes from members that would rival the firepower of the First Order.

The sci-fi series bested Adele, Taylor Swift and Amy Schumer as the top vote getter. Others up for the honor included streaming services, Jon Stewart, Jennifer Lawrence, Taraji P. Henson, Viola Davis and the Kardashians. Voters were asked to consider who had the most influence on entertainment and culture in 2015.

"In a year full of sequels, reboots and returns, none have recaptured the zeitgeist like 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens,'" wrote Nick Dutro of The Advertiser-Tribune in Tiffin, Ohio.

The initial impact of a "Star Wars" resurgence first began reverberating across the pop-culture landscape in 2012 when Disney acquired Lucasfilm for more than $4 billion, plotting a pair of movie spin-offs and a new trilogy merging veterans Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), Leia Organa (Carrie Fisher) and Han Solo (Harrison Ford) with newcomers Rey (Daisy Ridley), Finn (John Boyega) and Kylo Ren (Adam Driver).

In the year leading up to the December release of "The Force Awakens," Disney and Lucasfilm unleashed a barrage of "Star Wars" merchandise, comic books and video games that fueled anticipation for the film.

When the movie opened in theaters, "The Force Awakens" lit up screens—and fans' eyeballs—brighter than a lightsaber. With an astronomical $248 million debut at the box office last weekend, the newest "Star Wars" entry trampled over the record for biggest debut in North America, set earlier in the year by "Jurassic World."

"The Force Awakens" also has won over most critics, despite not being screened for them ahead of the film's mammoth Dec. 14 premiere in Hollywood. The American Film Institute selected it as one of its 10 best movies of the year, and the Critics' Choice Awards added it as an 11th best picture nominee, leading many to have faith in "The Force Awakens" as a viable Oscar contender.

"The 'Star Wars' franchise is holding an IOU that it could cash in this year," said Tom O'Neil, editor-in-chief of Gold Derby, a site that handicaps Hollywood awards and other events. "The Oscars owe major love to the 'Star Wars' franchise. It's one of the most successful and beloved franchises in Hollywood history. It's criminal that Oscar voters have never historically taken sci-fi seriously."

While previous "Star Wars" films garnered 22 nominations and seven wins at the Academy Awards, only the original "Star Wars" earned a best picture nod. It lost to "Annie Hall" in 1978.

"The Force Awakens" is already on the academy's short list for a visual effects nomination with 9 other films, and O'Neil is hopeful that it will be among the best picture candidates when the Oscar nominations are announced Jan. 14. He also wouldn't be shocked if Harrison Ford is recognized for reprising his role as Han Solo and composer John Williams earns his 50th nomination for the film's score.

"It's funny," said Abrams. "I've spent the last few years with everyone asking me how I am dealing with the pressure. The truth is that anything that happens at this point is icing on a cake that I'm just happy came out of the oven."

"Star Wars" joins the list of previous AP Entertainer of the Year winners who in recent years have mostly included female performers, including Adele, Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lawrence, Lady Gaga, Tina Fey and Betty White. The animated Disney juggernaut "Frozen" captured the prize in 2014, and Stephen Colbert was honored in 2007.

AP's top songs of 2015

NEW YORK (AP)—If The Associated Press could create its own "NOW" compilation album of 2015, this would be it. Here are the top 10 songs of the year, according to AP music editor Mesfin Fekadu:

1. "Where Are U Now," Skrillex and Diplo featuring Justin Bieber: "Where Are U Now" not only had a danceable hook juxtaposed with soft verses, it also marked Bieber's comeback. And where he's at now is the top of the charts, and thankfully not the top bunk in prison.

2. "Let It Go," James Bay: This British singer's burning single, highlighted by the guitar, is just as lovely and passionate as Ed Sheeran's "Thinking out Loud." On second thought, it's slightly better.

3. "Worth It," Fifth Harmony featuring Kid Ink: Don't even try to resist this song—Fifth Harmony came out swinging this year with an addictive track that proves they're unquestionably worth it.

4. "How Deep Is Your Love," Calvin Harris and Disciples: The king of the club is this song.

5. "Ex's and Oh's," Elle King: King's scratchy vocals mixed with her badass guitar playing combine to make this tune irresistible.

6. "Trap Queen," Fetty Wap: "Trap Queen" was just the beginning of Wap's grungy, melodic style that dominated our playlists this year, along with "679," ''My Way" and "Again." We were all screaming "1738."

7. "Burning House," Cam: Rising singer Cam's slow groove was country radio's most refreshing song, thanks in part to producer Jeff Bhasker (Kanye West, fun.)

8. "Rise Up," Andra Day: R&B's brightest newcomer brings on the vocals with her anthemic, motivational single.

9. "Runnin' (Lose It All)," Naughty Boy featuring Beyoncé and Arrow Benjamin: Oh how excited we are for new music from Beyonce in 2016. This thumping house number is helping is us get by, though barely.

10. "Pablow the Blowfish," Miley Cyrus: Cyrus' piano tune about her dead blowfish is both silly and deep, and further proves that while she's wacky and tacky at times, she's also wacky and talented.

Mom eschews habit of baby teething on friend's fingers

DEAR ABBY: A friend I really like has been extremely helpful baby-sitting my 4-month-old son every once in a while. The problem is, she informed me that she rubs his gums and lets him chew on her fingers. I find this gross and strange. Clean fingers or not, I'd prefer she not do this. She only has him a couple of hours at a time, and he has teething toys.

Am I overreacting? If not, how do I politely inform my friend that I'd rather she not put her fingers in my baby's mouth? I can't think of a way to explain it that wouldn't offend her.

OFF LIMITS IN IDAHO

DEAR OFF LIMITS: What your friend is doing is neither gross nor strange. She was probably trying to soothe your teething baby who was showing signs of discomfort. Her fingers may have been more comfortable to chew on than the hard toy. However, you are the parent and if you prefer no more fingers in your baby's mouth, you should tell that to your friend and she shouldn't take offense.

DEAR ABBY: I often have thought about cooking food and taking it to neighbors when they experience a death in the family or a new baby, etc. I know when my parents passed away, kind relatives and neighbors brought us so much food we didn't know what to do with it all. But it was greatly appreciated and helped us more than they could ever know.

My problem is I tend to overthink this and then not follow through. (What if they don't eat meat? What if they're on special diets? What if they already have a lot of food or are allergic to something?) How can I offer something useful without knowing their eating habits? I have considered giving a restaurant gift card, but that doesn't seem as personal.

It seems years ago people never put so much thought into making a dish and taking it to the neighbors. Can you give me some insight?

WANTS TO HELP IN MICHIGAN

DEAR WANTS TO HELP: I don't think you are overthinking at all. The questions in your mind are intelligent ones. That's why you should pick up the phone and tell the families that you intend to bring them a gift of food, but before you do, you would like to know if they have any dietary restrictions. (Perhaps they already have a freezer full of cakes, pies and cookies and would enjoy something more solid -- like a casserole?) I am sure your thoughtfulness would be appreciated if you called to offer your condolences and asked what they could use.

CONFIDENTIAL TO MY READERS: A word to the wise: If you plan to toast the New Year tonight, please appoint a designated driver. And on this night especially, designated drivers should remember to drive defensively. To one and all, a happy, healthy New Year!

LOVE, ABBY

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

ARE YOU MAKING ANY RESOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR?
YEAH, I'M RESOLVING TO JUST WING IT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
SO YOU'RE STAYING THE COURSE?
I STICK TO MY STRENGTHS
12/31

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

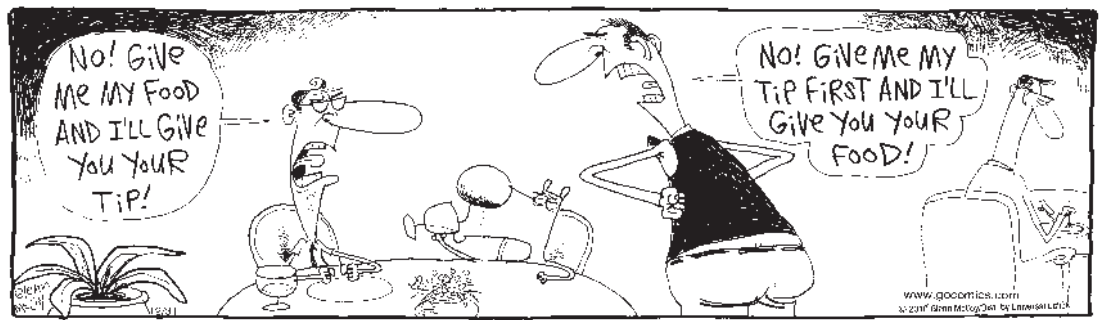
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

ADAM, I THINK THE CONFETTI CANNON IS A BAD IDEA.
I KNOW, BUT HERE IT COMES!
4... 3...
COVER YOUR EARS, EVERYONE!
2... 1...
KA-BWAM
OKAY, MAYBE WE DIDN'T NEED THE STADIUM CANNON.
BEST. NEW YEAR'S. EVER!!
12-31

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

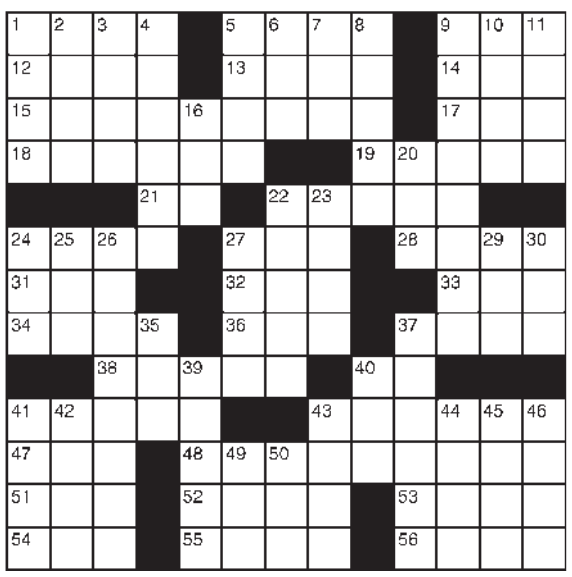
ACROSS
1 Cajun veggie
5 Fuzzy image
9 QB's goals
12 60 minutes
13 Pasadena's — Bowl
14 Wilde, for one
15 First puzzle clue
17 Lab eggs
18 Safe haven
19 Bid
21 "Some Like — Hot"
22 Agra's land
24 Facts and figures
27 "I love" (Lat.)
28 Nobel Prize subj.
31 "What a relief!"
32 Life-saving meth.
33 Bambi's aunt
34 Sportscaster Albert
36 Skirt's edge
37 June '44 event
38 Artist's stand
40 Ma's mate
41 Painter El —
43 On the decline?
47 Cat's foot
48 Designation of a serious fire
51 Botanist Gray
52 Choir voices
53 On — streak (winning)
54 Demure
55 Marsh plant
56 Totals

DOWN
1 "Yikes!"
2 Hawaiian coast
3 Sorry soul
4 Saudi —
5 "I'm c-cold!"
6 London lav
7 Naval letters
8 Upgrade a lawn
9 Deceitful
10 Plunge into a pool
11 Milky Way unit
16 Army bed
20 "A pox on thee!"
22 Spur on
23 Standard
24 Hoover —
25 Bond rating
26 Like some light bulbs
27 Long (for)
29 Lark or dime lead-in
30 "No" vote
35 Rug cleaner, briefly
37 Home of the Cowboys
39 To date
40 Unpaid TV ad
41 Transcript nos.
42 Skin eruption
43 Saharan
44 Honolulu's isle
45 Teen dance
46 911 responders
49 Spanish cheer
50 Colorado native

Solution time: 25 mins.

N	F	S	T	■	D	O	C	■	A	B	B	A
A	L	O	E	■	O	N	A	■	S	L	J	M
B	L	U	E	M	O	O	N	■	P	U	R	E
S	A	_	T	E	D	■	O	S	I	E	R	S
■	■	■	I	A	L	■	E	T	R	E	■	■
N	U	N	■	T	E	■	■	K	E	Y	E	D
A	S	A	P	■	S	A	L	■	D	E	W	Y
P	A	V	E	S	■	M	A	G	■	S	E	E
■	■	Y	A	N	G	■	W	A	R	■	■	■
P	E	B	B	L	E	■	S	M	O	G	G	Y
O	S	_	O	■	T	R	U	E	B	L	J	E
L	A	U	D	■	I	C	I	■	O	U	T	A
S	U	E	Y	■	T	A	T	■	T	E	S	S

Yesterday's answer 12-31



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Gabrielle Douglas, 20; Joey McIntyre, 43; Bebe Neuwirth, 57; Anthony Hopkins, 78.

Happy Birthday: Set your sights high and prepare to wheel and deal until you get what you want. Opportunity will knock this year, allowing you to get ahead financially and bring legal contracts and settlements to a positive close. Deal with personal issues as responsibly as possible, and avoid anyone using emotional manipulation to take advantage of you. Your numbers are 9, 13, 17, 21, 29, 34, 45.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Start getting ready to bring in the new year mentally, physically and emotionally. Exercise discipline and you can make your dreams come true. Positive change is heading your way. Focus on what you want and don't look back. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Celebrating with the people who share your interests will help you begin 2016 on a favorable note. Express your opinions and let the people you love know exactly how you feel. Abide by rules and regulations. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't start the year off on the wrong foot. Overindulgence or letting emotional matters spin out of control will leave a sour taste in your mouth. Make personal changes that can boost your confidence, and avoid anyone who is a poor influence. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Host a party or plan a quiet, romantic evening for you and your partner. Talk about future plans and explore the possibility of doing something you've always wanted to do. Invest in a joint venture with someone special. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): It's in with the new and out with the old, and that means making the changes that will bring you greater happiness and stability. Personal, emotional and physical changes will turn out well as long as you stick to a budget. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You'll be emotional due to uncertainty in your personal life. Realizing that change is necessary is half the battle. A discussion with someone who has been causing you grief will give you a better understanding of the situation. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Keep your celebration simple. It may be the end of the year, but indulgence will lead to disputes and unwanted changes. Bide your time, be diplomatic and plan your strategy for 2016. Work on personal change, not on changing. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Getting together with people you love or don't see frequently will do you good. Heading to a special place you don't visit often will set the stage for a romantic evening. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be in overdrive, so be careful not to burn out. Pace yourself or you will miss the turn-of-the-year festivities. Problems with authority figures and delays while traveling can be expected. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Look forward, not back. Bring in the year with people who are as progressive and proactive as you. Share your thoughts and resolutions and you will end up in good company when it comes to future pursuits. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't let what others do get to you. Diplomacy will be required if you are surrounded by people who are being careless and indulgent. Opt to spend a quiet evening with your immediate family or closest friends. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Let go of the past and embrace the future by resolving unfinished emotional matters with the people you want to keep in your life. Don't let regret drag you down. Open up, find common ground and start anew. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are precise, outgoing and astute. You are emotional, indulgent and a dreamer.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		1			2			9
	4		5				8	
	2			4				3
					4			5
6		4	3			2		
8				9			7	
	6				7		9	
5			6			1		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/31

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

8	4	6	5	3	7	2	1	9
7	5	2	1	9	6	4	8	3
9	3	1	2	8	4	5	6	7
6	7	4	3	2	5	8	9	1
1	2	5	9	6	8	3	7	4
3	9	8	7	4	1	6	2	5
5	6	7	8	1	3	9	4	2
2	8	3	4	7	9	1	5	6
4	1	9	6	5	2	7	3	8

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/31

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS Solution: 8 letters

L	G	N	I	N	N	A	L	P	A	R	T	Y	E	E
E	U	O	E	D	M	E	V	I	S	U	L	C	X	E
V	V	F	B	T	E	T	I	V	N	I	H	T	C	V
I	W	E	E	L	U	A	F	I	M	A	R	O	I	L
T	S	I	N	T	E	L	S	A	M	A	U	A	T	E
S	R	R	N	I	A	T	F	P	V	N	P	S	I	W
E	E	E	D	E	N	R	A	A	T	O	A	T	N	T
F	K	N	R	S	I	G	G	D	R	S	R	T	G	E
L	A	N	I	E	N	A	O	D	D	T	A	S	H	L
A	M	I	N	E	N	W	E	K	U	R	D	O	O	E
M	E	D	K	Z	N	R	I	D	N	O	E	H	R	V
R	S	A	A	I	I	Ⓢ	Ⓣ	Ⓐ	Ⓗ	K	L	S	N	I
O	I	N	G	N	S	R	E	M	A	E	R	T	S	S
F	O	C	G	A	T	H	E	R	I	N	G	H	T	E
T	N	E	M	E	S	A	B	Y	B	A	B	A	N	D

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Baby, Band, Basement, Champagne, Countdown, Dance, Dinner, Dress, Drink, Evening, Exciting, Exclusive, Extravaganza, Family, Favors, Festive, Flute, Formal, Friends, Gathering, Goblet, Grateful, Hats, Horns, Host, Ideas, Invite, Kiss, Loud, Noisemakers, Ordering, Parade, Party, Planning, Streamers, Stroke, Televised, Ties, Toast, Twelve, Wine

Yesterday's Answer: Golf

To purchase the **WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES #1 or #2**, order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 100 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

EMPLOYMENT

(1) Marketing Representative. Must have a 4 year college degree, (BS or BA in Marketing Management), Bilingual. BFJ Corporation. Email:jcjones@saipan.com

United Brothers Inc.
Is looking for the following:

- 2 Mechanic
- 1 Auto Painter
- 1 Body Repairer
- 1 Maintenance Repairer

Minimum of 5 years experience.
Call 323-1328 for inquiries.

ST. JUDE RENAL CARE FACILITY INC.

(01) REGISTERED NURSE

- Must pass NCLEX-RN and current CNMI RN License
- Attended a hemodialysis training program and management of hemodialysis inpatient and outpatient care
- At least four years hemodialysis experience and three years as a charge nurse in dialysis
- In-service training with Baxter Phoenix Machine
- Experience with Ameriwater Bicarbonate Distribution System
- Certification in Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- English Language Skills – Proficient in verbal, written, and comprehension
- Must hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Must be flexible with time schedule

Interested applicants must submit their resume or pick up an application at St. Jude Renal Care Facility Inc., at Chalan Kiya, Saipan. Deadline to submit an application will be on Friday, January 22, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call (670) 234-2901 ext. 128.

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
CHANCERY DIVISION –
FAMILY PART OCEAN COUNTY

DIONESIA M. KING, PLAINTIFF] DOCKET NO. FM-15-975-155] CIVIL ACTION] SUMMONS
VS.
JAY A. CAMACHO, DEFENDANT

FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO THE DEFENDANT NAMED ABOVE:

The Plaintiff named above has filed a lawsuit against you in the Superior Court of New Jersey. The complaint attached to this summons states the basis for this lawsuit. If you dispute this complaint, you or your attorney must file either (1) written answer or (2) a general appearance in accordance with R. 5:4-3(a) and proof of service with the deputy clerk of the Superior Court, Ocean County, located at 120 Hooper Avenue, Toms River, New Jersey 08753 within 35 days from the date you received this summons, not counting the date your receive it. A filing fee of $175 (no children)/ $200 (chil/ren) **(circle one)** payable to the clerk of the Superior Court must accompany your answer or motion or appearance when it is filed.

You must also send a copy of your answer or motion to the Plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address appear above. A telephone call will not protect your rights. You must file and serve a written answer or motion (with fee and completed Case Information Statement) if you want the Court to consider your answer or motion.

If you do not file and serve a written answer or motion within 35 days, the court may enter a judgement against you for the relief the Plaintiff demands, plus interest and money, wages, or property to pay all or part of the judgement.

If you cannot afford an attorney, you may call the Legal Services office in the county where you live or the Legal Services of New Jersey statewide, toll-free hotline at 1-888-LSNJ-LAW (1-888-576-5529). A list of Legal Services offices is attached to this form. If you do not have an attorney and are not eligible for free legal assistance, you may obtain a referral to an attorney by calling one of the Lawyer Referral Services. A list of these numbers is also provided.

/s/ Michelle M. Smith, Esq.
Clerk of Superior Court

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Opening date: December 31, 2015 **Closing date: January 22, 2016**

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(1) AOA Controller-I (Saipan)
(1) Secretary-II (Rota)
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(1) Procurement Technician (Saipan)
(1) Vessel Traffic Controller-I (Port of Saipan)
(1) Accountant-I (Saipan)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10 year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office is no later than ***4:30 p.m., Friday, January 22, 2015.***

Detailed information on qualifications and position description for the above positions shall be picked up along with the application form during regular working hours at the CPA's Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Saipan International Airport, Arrival Wing. For additional information, please contact the Ms. Addy C. Manahane, by email at acmanahane@cpa.gov.mp or by phone at (670) 237-6500.

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Horford leads Hawks to 121-115 win over the Rockets

HOUSTON (AP)—Al Horford had 30 points and 14 rebounds to lead the Atlanta Hawks to a 121-115 victory over the Houston Rockets on Tuesday night.

Atlanta trailed by 19 early in the game before rallying for the victory. Kent Bazemore added 26 points and Paul Millsap and Jeff Teague both had 22 as the Hawks won for the seventh time in eight games.

Dwight Howard led Houston with 30 points and 16 rebounds, while James Harden had 26 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists.

Atlanta took a lead late in the fourth quarter and employed the hack-a strategy, intentionally fouling Howard and Clint Capela repeatedly. The strategy was largely successful until Howard made a free throw to take the lead with just over two minutes remaining.

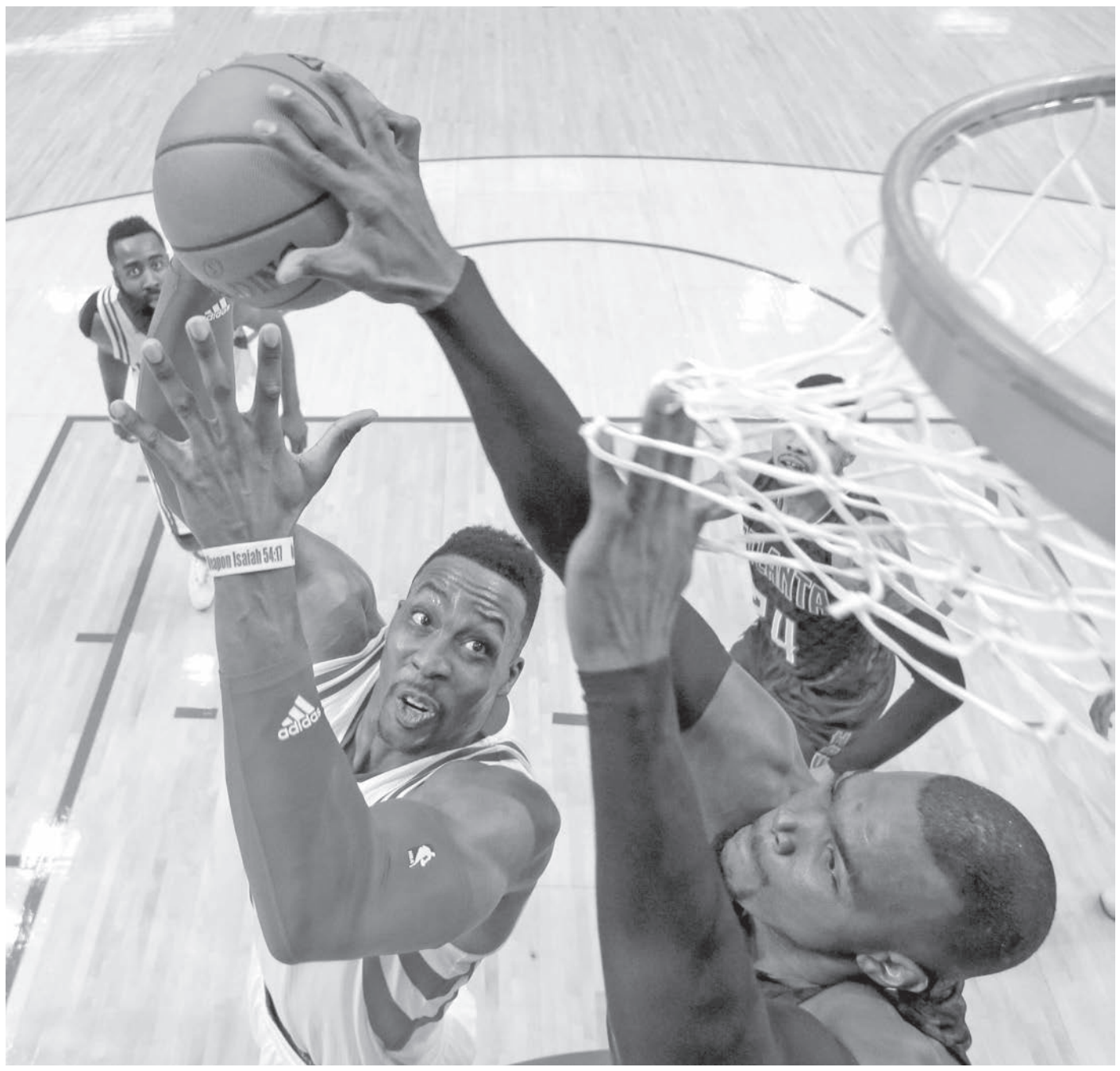
Atlanta then scored the final nine points of the game to steal the road victory.

Playing in their third back-to-back in less than three weeks, the weary Hawks allowed a season-high 41 first-quarter points. Houston led 71-56 at halftime, but Atlanta's defense buckled down in the third quarter, cutting the deficit to seven to enter the fourth.

Houston scored a season-high 71 points in the first half.

Kyle Korver's shooting slump continued for Atlanta. After going 0-for-8 from the 3-point line on Monday night, Korver went 0-for-10 in the game. Korver is 2 for 26 in his last four games, one of the worst shooting stretches of his career. After leading the league in 3-point percentage last season at 49.2 percent, Korver is having his worst shooting season in nearly six years, shooting under 39 percent.

With Korver struggling, the Hawks made just 14 of 41 3-pointers. Every Hawks starter besides Korver scored at least 20 points for Atlanta.



AP

Houston Rockets' Dwight Howard, left, has his shot blocked by Atlanta Hawks' Paul Millsap during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2015, in Houston.

Thunder 131, Bucks 123

In Oklahoma City, Russell Westbrook scored 27 points and Kevin Durant added 26 to lead the Thunder to a win over the Bucks.

Enes Kanter added 23 while rookie Cameron Payne had a career-high 16 for the Thunder.

Westbrook and Durant both scored more than 20 points for the 25th time this season as Oklahoma City overcame an early eight-point deficit to win for the 11th time in its last 14 games.

Khris Middleton scored a career-best 36 points to lead Milwaukee.

Knicks 108, Pistons 96

In New York, Carmelo Anthony scored 24 points and Derrick Williams added 18 to lead six Knicks in double figures as New York snapped a four-game losing streak with a win over the Pistons.

Jose Calderon added 15 points, Kyle O'Quinn had 12, Robin Lopez scored 11, and Kristaps Porzingis finished with 10.

Ersan Ilyasova led the Pistons with 19 points. Marcus Morris and Reggie Jackson each had 17.

The Knicks led by only four points, 80-76, early in the fourth quarter, but went on a 25-11 run to take an 18-point lead on Williams' long jumper with 1:42 left in the game.

Williams scored 16 of his points in the final quarter, hitting 5-of-6 shots from the field.

Grizzlies 99, Heat 90, OT

In Memphis, Tennessee, Marc Gasol scored seven of his 23 points in overtime to help the Grizzlies pull away in the extra period for a victory over the Heat.

Zach Randolph added 17 points for Memphis. Mike Conley and Jeff Green had 16 apiece, and Mario Chalmers scored 12 points. Gasol would add eight rebounds, six assists and four blocks, including a pair of rejections in the closing minutes.

Gasol's overtime performance included a stumbling move in the lane where he flipped the ball to the basket as he was fouled. The shot bounced through, Gasol converted the ensuing free throw and the Grizzlies were up 96-88 with 1:22 left — a lead Memphis would not relinquish.

Chris Bosh led Miami with 22 points, while Dwyane Wade finished with 19. Goran Dragic had 16 points.

The teams were tied at 83 at the end of regulation.

Cavaliers 93, Nuggets 87

In Denver, LeBron James scored 34 points on the eve of his 31st birthday and Iman Shumpert added a season-high 16 as the Cavaliers beat the Nuggets.

Kevin Love had eight points and 14 rebounds to help Cleveland finish off a four-game West Coast swing with a 2-2 mark. The Cavaliers rested Kyrie Irving on the second night of a back-to-back as he works his way back from a fractured left kneecap.

Reserve Will Barton had 29 for the injury-riddled Nuggets, who've now dropped six of seven. They were once again without Danilo Gallinari (sprained left ankle) and rookie Emmanuel Mudiay (sprained right ankle).

Trailing by 11 with 3:07 remaining, the Nuggets resorted to fouling Tristan Thompson, who's a 56 percent free throw shooter. Thompson struggled at the line, hitting 1 of 4, but Denver couldn't capitalize.

Ex-Globetrotters star Meadowlark Lemon dies

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Meadowlark Lemon, the "clown prince" of basketball's barnstorming Harlem Globetrotters, whose blend of hook shots and humor brought joy to millions of fans around the world, has died. He was 83.

Lemon's wife and daughter confirmed to the team that he died Sunday in Scottsdale, Arizona, Globetrotters spokesman Brett Meister said Monday. Meister did not know the cause of death.

Though skilled enough to play professionally, Lemon instead wanted to entertain, his dream of playing for the Globetrotters hatched after watching a newsreel of the all-black team at a cinema house when he was 11.

Lemon ended up becoming arguably the team's most popular player, a showman known as much for his confetti-in-the-water-bucket routine and slapstick comedy as his half-court hook shots and no-look, behind-the-back passes.

A sign of his crossover appeal, Lemon was inducted into both the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and the International Clown Hall of Fame.

"My destiny was to make people happy," Lemon said as he was inducted into the basketball hall as a contributor to the game in 2003.

Lemon

Lemon played for the Globetrotters during the team's heyday from the mid-1950s to the late-1970s, delighting fans with his skills with a ball and a joke. Traveling by car, bus, train or plane nearly every night, Lemon covered nearly 4 million miles to play in over 100 countries and in front of popes and presidents, kings and queens. Known as the "Clown Prince of Basketball," he averaged 325 games per year during his prime, that luminous smile never dimming.

"Meadowlark was the most sensational, awesome, incredible basketball player I've ever seen," NBA great and former Globetrotter Wilt Chamberlain said shortly before his death in 1999. "People would say it would be Dr. J or even (Michael) Jordan. For me it would be Meadowlark Lemon."

Lemon spent 24 years with the Globetrotters, doing tours through the racially torn South in the 1950s until he left in 1979 to start his own team.

He was one of the most popular athletes in the world during the prime of his career, thanks to a unique blend of athleticism and showmanship.

Playing against the team's nightly foil, the Washington Generals, Lemon left fans in awe with an array of hook shots, no-look passes and the nifty moves he put on display during the Globetrotters' famous circle while "Sweet Georgia Brown" played over the loudspeaker.

He also had a knack for sending the fans home with a smile every night, whether it was with his running commentary, putting confetti in a water bucket or pulling down the pants of an "unsuspecting" referee.

"We played serious games too, against the Olympic teams and the College All-Stars," Lemon said. "But that didn't stop us from putting the comedy in there."

Lemon became an icon in the 1970s, appearing in movies, including "The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh," numerous talk shows and even a stint in the cartoon "Scooby Doo," with Scatman Crothers doing his voice.

After leaving the Globetrotters, Lemon started his own team, The Bucketeers, and played on a variety of teams before rejoining the Globetrotters for a short tour in 1994.

Lemon spent the last years of his life trying to spread a message of faith through basketball. He became an ordained minister in 1986 and was a motivational speaker, touring the country to meet with children at basketball camps and youth prisons with his Scottsdale-based Meadowlark Lemon Ministries.

"I feel if I can touch a kid in youth prison, he won't go to the adult prison," Lemon said in 2003.

He never lost touch with his beloved sport. Lemon said he rose every day at 4 a.m. and, after prayers, headed for the gym to run sprints and practice shooting.

Chip Kelly fired after Eagles moves lead to missed playoffs

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—GM Chip Kelly cost coach Chip Kelly his job.

The Philadelphia Eagles fired Kelly Tuesday night with one game left in his third season, dumping the coach/personnel boss after missing the playoffs in consecutive years.

Kelly was released before the finale of a disappointing season that began with Super Bowl expectations. The Eagles are 6-9 after going 10-6 two years in a row. They were eliminated from playoff contention after losing to Washington at home on Saturday night.

Eagles CEO Jeffrey Lurie issued a one-sentence statement to reporters saying he appreciates Kelly's contributions and wishes him success going forward.

Lurie told fans in an email that he decided to make a change after "evaluating the many factors involved in our performance as a team."

The Eagles also fired Ed Marynowitz, who was vice president of player personnel. Longtime NFL executive Tom Donahoe will assume the role of senior director of player personnel.

Kelly gained full control of personnel decisions last offseason, winning a power struggle with then-general manager Howie Roseman. But Kelly tore apart a winning team and several of his bold moves backfired.

Since March 2014, Kelly released three-time Pro Bowl wide receiver DeSean Jackson, traded two-time All-Pro running back LeSean McCoy, didn't resign 2014 Pro Bowl wideout Jeremy Maclin, cut two-time Pro Bowl guard Evan Mathis and traded quarterback Nick Foles and a 2016 second-round draft pick for Sam Bradford.

He also gave big money in free agency to running back DeMarco Murray and cornerback Byron Maxwell. Murray has been a bust and Maxwell has underperformed. Kelly even signed Tim Tebow, but released him after he won the competition for the No. 3 quarterback job.

A person familiar with the decision to fire Kelly told The Associated Press Tuesday night that the team didn't consider only stripping him of personnel control, opting to part with him entirely. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because Lurie will address Kelly's dismissal on Wednesday.

Kelly didn't want players perceived as "me-first" guys. He alienated some of his players, though the only ones who spoke out against him did it after they were gone.

McCoy, the franchise's all-time leading rusher and a fan favorite, made headlines when he said there's a reason Kelly got rid of "all the good black players." Cornerback Brandon Boykin, who was traded to Pittsburgh, said Kelly was "uncomfortable" around black players.

AP
Philadelphia Eagles head coach Chip Kelly listens to a question during a news conference at the NFL football team's practice facility, Monday, Dec. 28, 2015, in Philadelphia.

Other players supported Kelly and moves such as signing Murray and Maxwell contradicted McCoy's claim. But Kelly's reputation took a hit anyway.

Shortly after Kelly was fired, former Eagles linebacker Emmanuel Acho tweeted: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Suspended Cleveland Browns receiver Josh Gordon tweeted: "Shady, Maclin, Foles, Djax.. Smh."

Two current Eagles players, speaking on condition of anonymity because the team was not publicly discussing the firing, told the AP that several players had met in groups in recent weeks to discuss their frustration with Kelly. They said they expressed relief in text exchanges with teammates after the team announced it had fired Kelly, after most players had left the team's practice facility for the day.

Kelly replaced Andy Reid and led the Eagles to an NFC East title in 2013 after they were 4-12 a year earlier. The Eagles lost at home to New Orleans in the playoffs and missed the postseason in 2014 following a 9-3 start.

They were 7-12 in Kelly's last 19 games.

Kelly was considered one of the most innovative coaches in college when the Eagles lured him away from Oregon in 2013. He brought his up-tempo offense and a unique approach that included monitoring players' sleep habits, changing the menu in the cafeteria and playing loud music during practices. Players had protein shakes waiting for them after practice and the team took the field on Tuesdays, which is a day off for the rest of the NFL.

Kelly's offense was dynamic his first season and set several franchise records. It steadily declined the next two years. The defense has been the worst in the NFL for three seasons.

Offensive coordinator Pat Shurmur will coach the team in the season finale at the New York Giants on Sunday.

Lurie told fans President Don Smolenski and Roseman, the executive vice president of football operations, will assist him in the search for a new coach.

Roseman helped convince Kelly to take the job after he initially decided to stay at Oregon. Kelly ended up taking Roseman's job without the title - the Eagles technically didn't have a GM this season. But Roseman is the last one standing in Philadelphia.

Many fans are thrilled Kelly's gone, celebrating publicly and on social networks.

Dane Lawrence, of Philadelphia, saw the news on his phone while walking down a downtown street and celebrated on the sidewalk.

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CNMI athletes move and excel in collegiate ranks

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

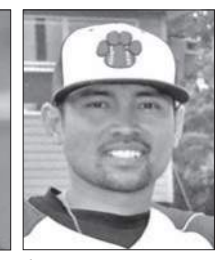
Del Rosario

Dickinson

Taisacan

Minor

Rabauliman


Jones

Kim

6 Several CNMI athletes made it to their collegiate teams in 2015.

Enrico Del Rosario, who suited up for the CNMI men's national and youth teams in the past, signed up for Alderson Broaddus University's football team competing in the NCAA Division II. Two more former CNMI national football squad members—John Taisacan and Ethan Dickinson—are also trying to start their collegiate career after red-shirting for Louisiana State University-Alexandria and College of the Desert in California, respectively.

In tennis, Thea Minor will also suit up for an NCAA Division II school (Henderson State University) after an impressive debut with the New Mexico Military Institute in the NJCAA Division 1. Tammy Ackerman, who is now based in Thailand, still represented the CNMI in off-island competitions and played for Pacific Oceania that ruled the 2015 Junior Fed Cup Asia/Oceania Pre Qualifying in Kuching, Malaysia.

Saipan Little League product Jeremy Rabauliman earned a regular spot on Lower Columbia College Red Devils's roster and hopes to follow the footsteps of Joshua Jones, who is now playing with the University of West Alabama in NCAA Division II. Jones helped the Tigers win the Gulf South Conference Baseball Tournament.

Just like Jones, golfer Leina Kim and American football player Savali Talalemotu played significant roles in their collegiate teams' campaign.

Kim, who played for the Colorado State University-Pueblo and won the Golfer of the Year award in their conference three times, advanced to the nationals in her last season with the Thunderwolves.

Talalemotu, on the other hand, had his most memorable game so far with the Portland State University when he sacked Washington State University quarterback Luke Falk in the Vikings 24-17 upset of the Cougars.

Young pitcher shines for Brewers

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rookie pitcher Lancaster Secharmidal played like a veteran in helping the GSM Brewers complete its three-peat title bid in the 2015 season of the Saipan Baseball League.

The 19-year-old former Saipan Little League standout tossed seven innings, six in shutout fashion, as the Brewers scored a 10-1 crushing of the Falcons in the deciding game of their best-of-five title series.

Secharmidal gave up four hits while striking out nine and walking two in a superb performance on the mound capped by a finals most valuable player honors after the match. He even had 1-2-3 innings getting a lot of help from the Brewers' defense.

The Brewers slowly pulled away and enjoyed an 8-1 lead entering the bottom of the seventh behind the superb batting of Pat Alepuyo, Diego Camacho, Nokki Saralu, Jun Rabauliman, and the reliable veteran Manny Sablan.

7

JON PEREZ
The GSM Brewers needed five games in order to beat the Falcons in this year's Saipan Baseball League finals. They will try to defend their title in the 2016 season.

Roy Celis, another league veteran, closed out for the Brewers to seal their third straight title win. The game ended when he forced L.J. Norita to ground out for the final play.

The Brewers and Falcons split their elimination round games with the former scoring a 10-4 win, while the latter bounced back with an 8-5 decision.

The Brewers, also the pennant champions, dispatched the IP&E Fielders in two games in the semifinals, while the Falcons followed suit with the same result against the Saipan Stevedore Yankees.

The Brewers' title defense bid was also threatened after the Falcons went up 2-1 after a 9-6 Game 3 win. The Brewers rallied for an 8-5 triumph in Game 4 to force the deciding match.

The Brewers completed its back-to-back title hunt last year with a 10-9 win over the Yankees in Game 4 of the finals.

From cellar dwellers to champs

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Bank of Saipan Red Sox only needed a year to fine-tune their game to turn their dismal performance last year to a title-winning campaign in the Majors division of the Saipan Little League.

The Randall Aguon-managed Red Sox, after finishing ninth to miss the playoffs last year, completed their notable rise with a 10-4 decision over the top-seeded Natibu Sports Association Braves.

Zack Camacho pitched a one-hit game in 2.2 innings in relief with both runs unearned. He also had five strikeouts and walked two.

Orren Cruz tossed 4.1 innings in start where he held the Braves to one hit with the two runs in the third were both unearned while retiring two and walking two more. He went 2-for-3 and took Vicente Camacho's third pitch to deep left for a solo shot that made it 5-2 in the top of the fourth.

Reyes had two doubles and scored three times batting 3-for-4, while Pangelinan, 2-for-4, had two runs and an RBI single in a four-run fifth inning by the Red Sox. Kiana Aldan whacked an RBI triple and touched home plate in the first.

Vicente Camacho took the loss after working for 4.2 innings where he gave up six earned runs on seven hits while fanning five and walking one.

The Red Sox, who finished third after the elimination round with a 10-2 record, foiled the Taalabwogh Little Falcons' title defense bid after a 9-2 win in last week's semifinals while the Braves crushed the Docomo Ol'Aces, 18-4.

One of the Red Sox's two losses were against the Falcons, who were aiming for a third straight title after beating the Braves in last year's finals, 9-2. They won their first crown in 2013 against Team McDonald's. Their other loss was against the Comets.

8

JON PEREZ
Shane Mallens of the Bank of Saipan Red Sox is a picture of joy in their victory against the Natibu Sports Association Braces in the finals of the Saipan Little League Majors division.

Jericho shakes off sophomore jinx

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Jericho Cruz showed no signs of an injury he suffered last season and has been playing like a veteran to help the Rain or Shine Elasto Painters reach the quarterfinals of the 2015-2016 Philippine Cup of the Philippine Basketball Association.

Cruz was drafted ninth overall in the 2014 Philippine Basketball Association rookie draft and was considered a sleeper in the annual exercise. He finished in the Top 5 of the Rookie of the Year race last season behind winner Stanley Pringle.

Cruz, who started his basketball career with the then G-Rollers of coach Joe Diaz, had a breakout game against Alaska on Dec. 5, 2014, where he scored 16 points behind a 6-of-7 field goal shooting.

His rookie stint, however, was cut short when he injured his left foot in the Painters' 100-90 win over Ginebra two days after.

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KC CRUZ
Jericho Cruz's sophomore year in the Philippine Basketball Association is turning out well with the Rain or Shine Elasto Painters set to meet the San Miguel Beermen in the semifinals of the Philippine Cup.

In this year's Philippine Cup, with starting guard Paul Lee sidelined by an injury, Cruz stepped up and filled the shoes left by the combo-guard from the University of the East.

The former CNMI standout has been turning up MVP-like numbers as the Painters earned the No. 3 seeding after the elimination round.

He had a breakout game in Rain or Shine's 103-81 crushing of Blackwater where he scored 23 points in 20 minutes of action on the floor in the elimination round. He also had three assists, two rebounds, and one steal.

The Elasto Painters, who finished with an 8-3 record, will be facing San Miguel in the semifinals.

Rain or Shine had five finals appearances since 2011 where it won the Governor's Cup.

Chan-Hom is AsPac party pooper

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Typhoon Chan-Hom spoiled the final days of action in the 2015 Asia Pacific Middle East Junior, Senior, and Big League Regional Baseball Tournament.

The finals in all three divisions were the only thing that needed to be settled but intermittent rain and windy conditions forced organizers to call off the remaining elimination round matches including the championship games.

Hong Kong and the Philippines were playing in the battle for third and fourth place in the Seniors division when tournament director James Ada made the announcement that the game will no longer be continued.

Chinese-Taipei and the CNMI, in the Junior League, each defeated the Philippines and Australia in early morning games that Saturday, July 6, when weather conditions were still not that bad.

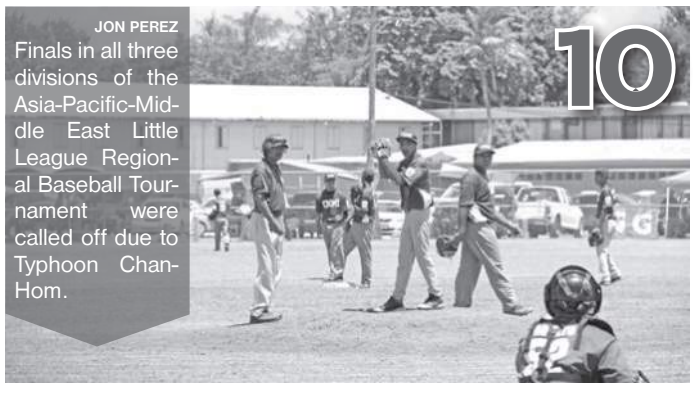
Homeland Security and the Emergency Management Office, during that time, informed organizers that they upgraded Chan-Hom to typhoon condition.

The July 5, finals matches between Chinese-Taipei and Australia (Juniors), the CNMI and Guam (Seniors), and Chinese-Taipei and Guam (Big) were called off.

Little League headquarters decided that Chinese-Taipei (Junior and Big) and the CNMI (Senior) would clinch the berths in their respective World Series.

Chinese-Taipei was the defending champion in both divisions and won the Junior League World Series last year after a 9-1 pummeling of Southwest Texas in the finals in Taylor, Michigan.

The Senior League World Series was held in Bangor, Maine while Easley, South Carolina hosted the Big League division.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JON PEREZ
Finals in all three divisions of the Asia-Pacific-Middle East Little League Regional Baseball Tournament were called off due to Typhoon Chan-Hom.

Fourth straight for CNMI Seniors

JON PEREZ
Roke Tenorio and the CNMI All-Stars represented the Asia-Pacific-Middle East Region for the fourth time in the Senior League World Series in Bangor, Maine this year.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The CNMI earned another trip to the Senior League World Series this year after sweeping past its opponents in the 2015 Asia-Pacific-Middle East Little League Regional Tournament.

Saipan hosted the Junior, Senior, and Big League regional tournament.

Team CNMI punched their ticket to Bangor, Maine as they went undefeated in the regionals, which was cut short by a typhoon.

They completed a six-game sweep in the double-elimination round against Guam, Hong Kong, and the Philippines.

They scored an average of five runs a game, while holding their opponents in scoring two runs per match.

The CNMI's biggest win was a 7-2 decision against Hong Kong in one of their two games. They also scored shutout wins over Guam and the Philippines in the first round.

In the World Series, the CNMI finished with a 2-3 where twice they defeated Europe-Africa representatives Lazzio Little League but dropped their two games against Maine District III.

They became the first victim of Canada in the tournament after losing a 13-inning thriller, 5-6.

Craig Aguon, Nathan Camacho, Franko Nakamura, Jobe Reyes, Anthony Agulto, Richard Atalig, Ethan Babauta, Henry Lizama, Roke Tenorio, Joaquin Chong, Franklin Lizama, and Aurel Mendiola, Kekuni Yamaduke Kaainoa, Brandon Pua, Lorenzo Sebaklim, and Robin Secharmidal are the members of the CNMI Senior All-Stars.

Greg Camacho was the manager with Lawrence Camacho as the head coach with John Manibusan as assistant.

Team CNMI also received a generous gift from the organizers and other kind-hearted individuals in the World Series as Typhoon Soudelor hit Saipan during the time they were in Maine.

Several players' houses and property were damaged prompting the host team starting a fundraising campaign that amounted to thousands of dollars that were divided to the entire team to help them rebuild their lives.

The CNMI previously represented the region in the World Series in 2004, 2007, and 2010.

Tournament rush for CNMI football players

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CNMI's Mareko Tekopua, right, stays close on defense against Laos' Thanousone Silipanya during the first half of their game in the AFC U16 Championship India 2016 Qualifiers last September at the National Sports Complex Stadium in Vientiane, Laos.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI football players had their most international exposures in 2015, as they competed in six off-island tournaments.

The first tournament was for the CNMI U14 Girls National Team, which participated in the AFC U14 Girls Regional Championships (East) 2015 at the National Football Training Centre in Beijing, China, and managed to score one goal in the event, thanks to Guinevere Borja's shot against Hong Kong in the last game of the squad.

Up next for the Commonwealth bets was the Luen Thai Cup where the CNMI Women's All-Stars stunned eventual champion and host Chelsea FC Soccer School (HK), 2-1.

From Hong Kong, the CNMI players returned to Beijing for the AFC U14 Regional Festival of Football 2015 (boys). The Teen Ayuyus went on to notch a win in the Asian Football Confederation-sanctioned event, beating Guam, 4-0.

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, who was in charge of forming the CNMI national teams, sent two more squads to AFC-organized competitions. The Commonwealth had its U16 crew flying to Vientiane, Laos for the AFC U16 Championship India 2016 Qualifiers and U19 team to Bangkok, Thailand, for the AFC U19 Championship Bahrain 2016 Qualifiers.

The last to leave Saipan for a regional tournament was the CNMI U13 Boys National Team, which saw action in the East Asian Football Federation Boys U13 Festival 2015 in Guam.

Chentsova makes record swims in Russia

MIKE MARRON
The CNMI's Victoria Chentsova competes in the 400m freestyle event in the 16th FINA World Championships last August at the Kazan Arena, in Kazan, Russia.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Victoria Chentsova represented the CNMI to the 16th FINA World Championships in Kazan, Russia before leaving for college and had a fitting "farewell" after setting two age group and national swim records.

She joined Heat 1 of the qualifying heat for the 400m freestyle and clocked in at 4:44.15 to surpass the four-year marks of fellow Saipan Swim Club swimmer Xenavee Pangelinan, who posted the 17 to 18 age group and national records of 4:45.21 on July 29, 2001 during the world championship in Fukuoka, Japan.

Chentsova's other age group and national marks came in the 800m freestyle, submitting 9:48.87 during the qualifying races to crush the nearly 20-year-old record of SSC's Anneka Sakovich, who logged 9:50.22 on Aug. 18, 1995.

The CNMI swimmer's record swims in Russia came a few weeks after she made it to the finals of the 200m freestyle event in the Pacific Games in Papua New Guinea. Chentsova eventually missed the podium finish after placing fifth in the medal round.

Soudelor crushes sports facilities

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Sports facilities on Saipan were not spared by Typhoon Soudelor's wrath, forcing the suspension and cancellation of local tournaments.

The Oleai Sports Complex, which houses the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, the track and field facility, the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field, and Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Softball Field, sustained major damage and was without power for months. Until now, the baseball and softball fields have yet to host tournaments, while only the scrimmage area allowed at the Ada Gym and the public using the track and field facility and the football pitch are advised to take extra caution.

Repair work for these facilities are expected to start next year as the Northern Marianas Sports Association, which is the caretaker of the Oleai complex, awaits the release of funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Besides the sports complex, the Marianas High School Gymnasium, Northern Marianas College Gymnasium, the American Memorial Park tennis courts, Kan Pacific Swimming Pool, and some basketball courts on island were also hit by Soudelor.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The batting cage at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field crumpled after being hit by Typhoon Soudelor last Aug. 2.

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Carol Lee's feats top 2015 list

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Carol Lee's twin achievements in 2015 put CNMI tennis ahead of its rivals in the Pacific region.

Lee earned the highest ranking among the junior tennis players in the Pacific after placing at No. 747 (she slid to No. 748 at press time, but still tops the region) in the Juniors ITF Circuit in November. She barged into the Top 1,000 in the world rankings and collected 66.25 points (singles and doubles combined) after playing in Guam, New Caledonia, Fiji, and Singapore.

The 14-year-old, who just joined the Juniors ITF Circuit early in 2015 as she was too young to compete in the elite tournaments last year, bagged her first rankings points (5) in the Calvo's Selectcare ITF Junior Championships 2015 in Hagatna, Guam, where she defeated Japan's Haruna Tsuzuki in the Round of 32, 6-2, 6-4. In New Caledonia, Lee got 20 points after advancing to the Round of 16 of the singles event of the Open Junior BNP PARIBAS de Nouvelle-Caledonie in Noumea and to the quarterfinals in the doubles.

In Fiji, the Saipan Community School student participated in the South Pacific Open Junior Championships and won 10 ranking points for qualifying to the quarterfinals in the doubles event. She saw action in two more Juniors ITF tournaments in Fiji—Oceania Open Junior Championships and Oceania Closed Junior Championships—and was awarded 40 more points for making it to the semis and Round of 16 in the singles play. In her last Juniors ITF event for the year, Lee notched a quarterfinals seat in the Singapore ITF Junior Championships 2015 to claim 10 more world ranking points.

Besides getting the highest-ranking among the Pacific players, Lee again made history for the CNMI by ruling the three age groups in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championship for three consecutive years. She won the U16 singles championships in 2015 to add to her U12 (2013) and U14 (2014) crowns.

Lee's records in the Pacific were complimented by the notable performance of her fellow CNMI players in the POJC and North Pacific Regional Championships.

The CNMI Junior Tennis Team clinched four singles championships in the regionals held in Guam with Tania Tan and Robbie Schorr ruling the U14 division, Isabel Heras prevailing in the girls U16, and Conatsu Kaga winning in the girls U12. Conatsu also took the doubles crown with younger sister Coume, while the pair of Tan and Malika Miyawaki and duo of Heras and Ami Tsukagoshi topped the U14 and U16 doubles, respectively.

In the POJC, the Jeff Race-coached CNMI team was ranked second among the 17 participating island-nations, behind powerhouse Tahiti. The Commonwealth sent 14 players to the POJC that was held in Fiji and 10 made it to the quarterfinals, six in the semis, and two in the finals.

Editor's note: *Even the sports community wasn't immune to the devastation brought by Typhoon Soudelor in August as the powerful storm damaged sports facilities across Saipan. The lack of electricity for a good majority of the next three months also didn't help. Like the island community though, local athletes slowly recovered from travails brought by Soudelor and continued to impress as they pushed themselves to do their very best. In today's yearender,* Saipan Tribune *celebrates the islands' athletes with the Top Sports Stories of 2015.*

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Carol Lee gets ready to serve during a singles game in the 2015 IT&E Northern Marianas Junior Championships last May at the Pacific Islands Club tennis courts.